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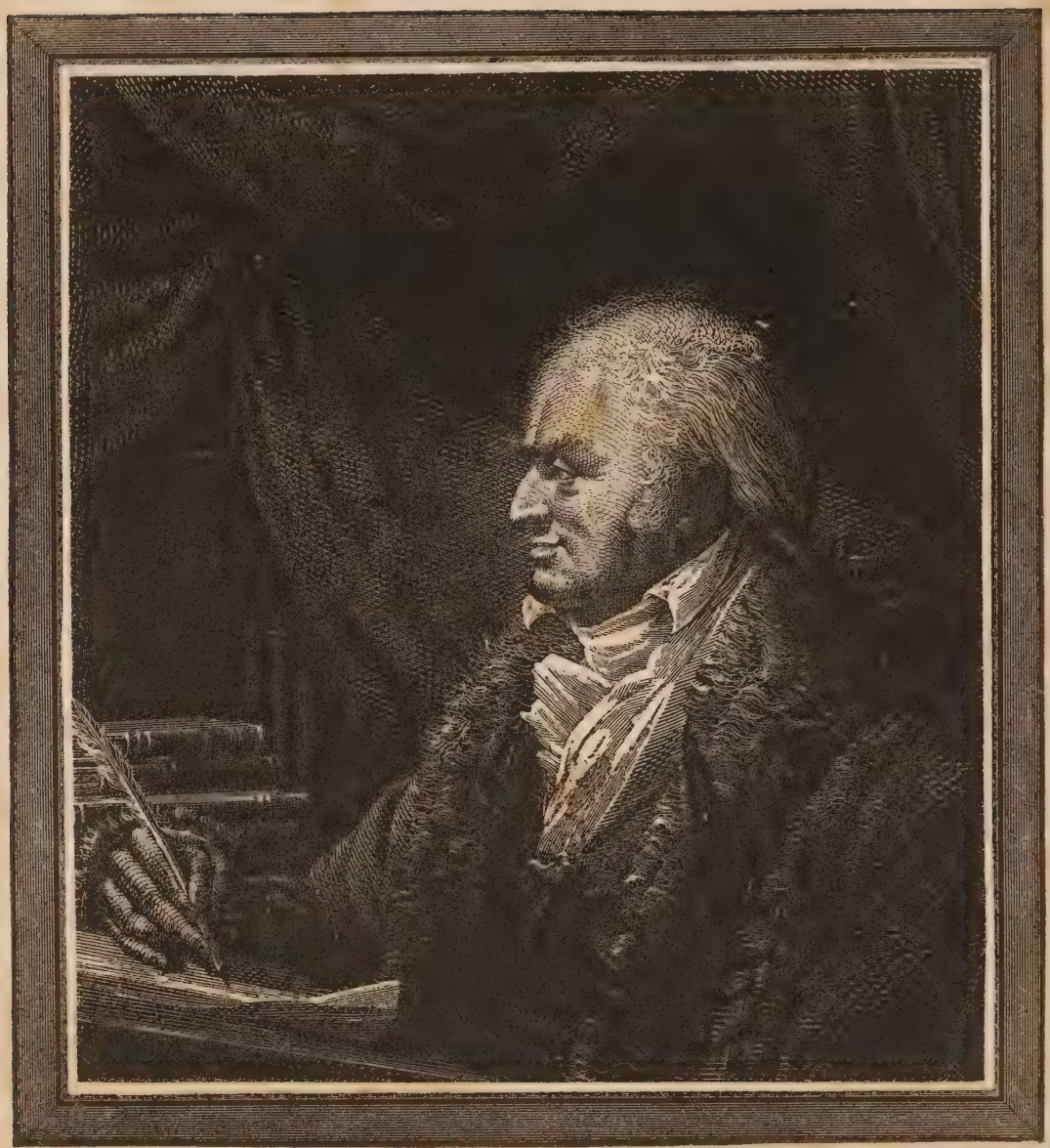

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THE LORD BISHOP OF ST DAVIDS.

My Lord,

I trust you will excuse the liberty I take in inscribing to you a new edition of my Letters from Scotland. That none of these letters were addressed to your Lordship, is a circumstance for which I take great shame to myself, after the very kind manner in which you spoke to me on that

head, the day I left you—may I be permitted to add, after the long experience I have had of your Lordship's concern and attachment, in several years of professional attendance, and, since that was laid aside, of private intercourse and friendship.

I must not attempt to deny, that there are some things in these Letters which are not exactly what I should have judged proper for your Lordship's eye;—but your Lordship is aware that they were written without the smallest notion of being printed. I hope the effect of the whole correspondence may be agreeable to you, and I well know the gentle and forgiving nature of your disposition. Above all, I should be highly flattered to learn that the account I have given of the State of Religion in Scotland, had interested and pleased you. The truly liberal and apostolic zeal with which your Lordship has so long been la-

bouring to serve my countrymen in their most important concerns, is appreciated and honoured by none more highly than,

My Lord,

Your Lordship's very humble,

and very affectionate Servant,

Peter Morris.

Pensharpe-Hall,
Aberystwith.

THE

EPISTLE LIMINARY

TO

THE SECOND EDITION.

TO

MR DAVIES,

BOOKSELLER, IN THE STRAND, LONDON.

Dear Sir,

The high terms in which you are pleased to express yourself concerning the specimens of my Letters from Scotland which have fallen into your hands, are, I assure you, among the most valued testimonies of approbation which have ever come in my way. To receive applause from one's acquaintances, is more delightful than to receive it from strangers; but the most precious of all tokens is that which proceeds from an old and dear friend. It is true, that in such case there may be, in general,

no small suspicion of partiality, but this cannot be the case with you, as you say you liked the work before you were aware of the name of its author.

Since that name has now been divulged through the rashness of a certain publication, I do not see that any very good purpose could be answered by attempting to keep up the mystery in the work itself. I therefore accept of your offers with regard to the Second Edition, and permit you to send it forth into the world with the name of Peter Morris as conspicuously affixed to it as you may deem expedient.

About the same time that your letter reached me, I had another letter on the same subject from my friend Mr William Blackwood, of Edinburgh. As you and he are already connected in so many ways, it strikes me that no inconvenience could attend your being connected together in this little matter also. I shall be happy if you find it consistent with your views to communicate the purport of what I have said to him, with all haste; and hope to see the

Second Edition graced with both your names on the title-page.

When in Edinburgh I became acquainted with Mr James Ballantyne, and have a strong inclination that any little thing of mine should be printed at his press, both from my regard for the man himself, and on account of the high report I heard of his qualifications in that way, from some of the best judges I know of. The First Edition being but a coarse job, and so small withal, I did not think of him, but trust there will be nothing to prevent him undertaking this, about which Mr Blackwood will be able to arrange with him very easily, being on the spot. I should think the best way would be to leave the style of printing, &c. entirely to Mr Ballantyne's own discretion —I am sure he will do all he can to make my book a pretty one. As for correcting of proofs, &c., I dare say I might very safely leave that also to Mr Ballantyne; but I have a friend in Edinburgh, (a Mr Wastle,) who will find it quite an amusement to superintend all that affair; and, by the way,

I am a very bad hand at correcting proofs myself, for I read them so quickly, that my eye passes over a thousand errata, for one that escapes the observation of a person more accustomed to such things.

What you say about the portraits, puzzles me more than anything else; I mean as to the propriety of introducing such things at all. It is very true, however, as you have heard, that my pencil was in request while I was in Scotland, almost as much as my pen, and that I have now a very rich portfolio of the chief worthies I met with in that northern region. In this matter, too, I am inclined to trust more to my friends' judgment than to my own, so I have sent you this day (per waggon) the whole lot of the sketches, leaving you to select for the engraver such as seem most likely to improve the appearance and popularity of the work. I think, however, you should on no account omit the sketches of the Man of Feeling, Mr Scott, Mr Jeffrey, Mr Alison, and Dr Chalmers. The others you may do with as you please.

I would have sent you my drawings of scenery also, but really in the present day when so much is a-doing in that line by much abler hands, I feel shy about pushing my rude efforts upon the public. I have, therefore, packed up only a very few specimens —not at all for the engraver—but merely as a present to Mrs Davies, which I beg she will accept, as also the cheese which accompanies them, along with the best wishes and compliments of a very old acquaintance and admirer. You cannot do better than have the etchings executed in Edinburgh also. Nobody can be better for the purpose than Mr Lizars—and, if he be too much engaged to do the whole, he can get a very excellent young artist, some of whose works I saw when there, to give him assistance—I mean Mr Stewart, who is engraving Allan's Picture of The Robbers dividing their Spoil. By the bye, I had a note from Sir Joseph Banks a day or two ago, in which he says a great deal about a new invention of Mr Lizars, which he thinks

is the greatest thing that has occurred in engraving since the time of Albert Durer. I have not seen any specimen of it, but do ask him to try some of the portraits in the new way—say my own—for that is of least consequence.*

As I am just going over to Dublin to spend a few weeks with my brother Sam, I shall not be able to hear from you again about this matter—so I leave it with perfect confidence in your hands, and those of Mr Blackwood. I hear the cry for the book is great, particularly in the North; therefore do bestir yourselves, and have PETER out before the rising of Parliament.

---

* The portrait of Dr Morris is done in this new style; and had the time permitted, the others would all have been done so likewise. It is thrown off by the common printing-press, as the reader will observe—but this is only one of the distinguishing excellencies of this new and splendid invention of Mr Lizars. I am happy that my friend's book has the honour of being the first graced with a specimen of it; and not the less so that the specimen presents a capital likeness of my friend himself.

W. W.

I hope you won't allow next Autumn to go over, without coming down and paying a visit to some of your old friends in your native country—and I am vain enough to hope you won't omit us if you do come. I am an idler man, now-a-days, than I could wish to be; so do come, my dear sir; and if my good friend, Mr Cadell, could come with you, *tanto melius;*—I shall do all I can to amuse you in the mornings; and, in the evenings, you shall both have as much as you please of what, I flatter myself, is not the worst claret in the principality. Between ourselves, I have a great desire to see you, as I have some thoughts of looking over my papers, and giving you Peter's Letters from Italy and Germany, in the course of the winter. Meantime, I remain, with great sincerity,

Your friend,

PETER MORRIS.

PENSHARPE-HALL,
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Wednesday Evening.

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PETER'S LETTERS

TO

HIS KINSFOLK.

PETER'S LETTERS

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HIS KINSFOLK.

LETTER I.

TO THE REV. DAVID WILLIAMS.

OMAN'S HOTEL, EDINBURGH, MARCH 5.

I ARRIVED here last night, only two hours later than my calculation at Liverpool, which was entirely owing to a small accident that befel Scrub, as I was coming down the hill to Musselburgh. I was so much engaged with the view, that I did not remark him stumble once or twice, and at last down he came, having got a pretty long nail run into his foot. I turned round to curse John, but perceived that he had

been fast asleep during the whole affair. However, it happened luckily that there was a farrier's shop only a few yards on, and by his assistance we were soon in a condition to move again. My chief regret was being obliged to make my entry into the city after night-fall, in consequence of the delay; and yet that is no great matter neither. As for the shandrydan, I have never had the least reason to repent my bringing it with me. It is positively the very best vehicle in existence. The lightness of the gig—the capacity of the chariot—and the stylishness of the car—it is a wonderful combination of excellencies. But I forget your old quizzing about my *Hobby*.

Having devoured a tolerable breakfast, I began to feel myself in a more genial condition than I had expected, after so long a journey, and sallied out to deliver one or two letters of introduction, and take a general view of the town, in a temper which even you might have envied. To say the truth, I know not a feeling of more delightful excitation, than that which attends a traveller, when he sallies out of a fine clear morning, to make his first survey of a splendid city, to which he is a stranger. I have often before experienced

this charming spirit-stirring sensation. Even now, I remember, with a kind of solemn enthusiasm, the day when (in your company too, my dear David,) I opened my window at the White Horse, Fetter-lane, and beheld, for the first time, the chimneys and smoke (for there what else could I behold?) of London. I remember the brief devoirs paid by us both to our coffee and muffins, and the spring of juvenile elasticity with which we bounded, rather than walked, into the midst of the hum, hurry, and dusky magnificence of Fleet-Street. How we stared at Temple-Bar! How our young blood boiled within us, as we passed over the very stones that had drank the drops as they oozed from the fresh-dissevered head of brave old Balmerino! With what consciousness of reverence did we pace along the Strand—retiring now and then into a corner to consult our pocket-map—and returning with a high satisfaction, to feel ourselves under the shadow of edifices, whose very names were enough for us! How we stood agaze at Charing Cross! The statue of the Martyr at our right—Whitehall on our left—Westminster Abbey, lifting itself like a cloud before us—pillars and palaces all around, and the sun lighting up the whole

scene with rays enriched by the deep tinges of the atmosphere through which they passed.

I do not pretend to compare my own feelings now-a-days with those of that happy time —neither have I any intention of representing Edinburgh as a place calculated to produce the same sublime impressions, which every Englishman must experience when he first finds himself in London. The imagination of a Southern does not connect with this northern city so many glorious recollections of antiquity, nor is there any thing to be compared with the feeling of moral reverence, accorded by even the dullest of mankind, to the actual seat and centre of the wisest and greatest government in the world. Without at all referring to these things, the gigantic bulk and population of London, are, of themselves, more than sufficient to make it the most impressive of all earthly cities. In no place is one so sensible, at once, to the littleness and the greatness of his nature—how insignificant the being that forms a scarcely distinguishable speck in that huge sweep of congregated existence—yet how noble the spirit which has called together that mass—which rules and guides and animates them all—which so adorns

their combination, and teaches the structures of art almost to rival the vastness of Nature. How awful is the idea which the poet has expressed, when he speaks of "all that mighty heart!"

And yet there is no lack of food for enthusiasm even here. Here is the capital of an ancient, independent, and heroic nation, abounding in buildings ennobled by the memory of illustrious inhabitants in the old times, and illustrious deeds of good and of evil; and in others, which hereafter will be reverenced by posterity, for the sake of those that inhabit them now. Above all, here is all the sublimity of situation and scenery—mountains near and afar off —rocks and glens—and the sea itself, almost within hearing of its waves. I was prepared to feel much; and yet you will not wonder when I tell you, that I felt more than I was prepared for. You know my mother was a Scotchwoman, and therefore, you will comprehend that I viewed the whole with some little of the pride of her nation. I arrived, at least, without prejudices against that which I should see, and was ready to open myself to such impressions as might come.

I know no city, where the lofty feelings, gene-

rated by the ideas of antiquity, and the multitude of human beings, are so much swelled and improved by the admixture of those other lofty, perhaps yet loftier feelings, which arise from the contemplation of free and spacious nature herself. Edinburgh, even were its population as great as that of London, could never be merely a city. Here there must always be present the idea of the comparative littleness of all human works. Here the proudest of palaces must be content to catch the shadows of mountains; and the grandest of fortresses to appear like the dwellings of pigmies, perched on the very bulwarks of creation. Everywhere—all around—you have rocks frowning over rocks in imperial elevation, and descending, among the smoke and dust of a city, into dark depths such as nature alone can excavate. The builders of the old city, too, appear as if they had made nature the model of their architecture. Seen through the lowering mist which almost perpetually envelopes them, the huge masses of these erections, so high, so rugged in their outlines, so heaped together, and conglomerated and wedged into each other, are not easily to be distinguished from the yet larger and bolder forms of cliff and ravine, among which

their foundations have been pitched. There is a certain gloomy indistinctness in the formation of these fantastic piles, which leaves the eye, that would scrutinize and penetrate them, unsatisfied and dim with gazing.

In company with the first friend I saw, (of whom more anon,) I proceeded at once to take a look of this superb city from a height, placed just over the point where the old and new parts of the town meet. These two quarters of the city, or rather these two neighbouring but distinct cities, are separated by a deep green valley, which once contained a lake, and which is now crossed at one place by a huge earthen mound, and at another by a magnificent bridge of three arches. This valley runs off towards the æstuary of the Forth, which lies about a mile and a half from the city, and between the city and the sea there rises on each side of it a hill—to the south that called Arthur's Seat—to the north the lower and yet sufficiently commanding eminence on which I now stood—the Calton Hill.

This hill, which rises about 350 feet above the level of the sea, is, in fact, nothing more than a huge pile of rocks covered with a thin coating of soil, and, for the most part, with a

beautiful verdure. It has lately been circled all round with spacious gravelled walks, so that one reaches the summit without the least fatigue. It seems as if you had not quitted the streets, so easy is the ascent; and yet where did streets or city ever afford such a prospect! The view changes every moment as you proceed; yet what grandeur of unity in the general and ultimate impression! At first, you see only the skirts of the New Town, with apparently few public edifices, to diversify the grand uniformity of their outlines; then you have a rich plain, with green fields, groves, and villas, gradually losing itself in the sea-port town of Edinburgh,—Leith. Leith covers, for a brief space, the margin of that magnificent Frith, which recedes upwards among an amphitheatre of mountains, and opens downward into the ocean, broken everywhere by isles green and smiling, excepting where the bare brown rock of the Bass lifts itself above the waters midway to the sea. As you move round, the Frith disappears, and you have Arthur's Seat in your front. In the valley between lies Holyrood, ruined—desolate—but majestic in its desolation. From thence the Old Town stretches its dark shadow—up, in a line

to the summit of the Castle rock—a royal residence at either extremity—and all between an indistinguishable mass of black tower-like structures—the concentrated "walled city," which has stood more sieges than I can tell of.

Here we paused for a time, enjoying the majestic gloom of this most picturesque of cities. A thick blue smoke hung low upon the houses, and their outlines reposed behind on ridges of purple clouds;—the smoke, and the clouds, and the murky air, giving yet more extravagant bulk and altitude to those huge strange dwellings, and increasing the power of contrast which met our view, when a few paces more brought us once again upon the New Town—the airy bridge—the bright green vale below and beyond it—and skirting the line of the vale on either side, the rough crags of the Castle rock, and the broad glare of Prince's Street, that most superb of terraces—all beaming in the open yellow light of the sun—steeples and towers, and cupolas scattered bright beneath our feet—and, far as the eye could reach, the whole pomp and richness of distant commotion—the heart of the city.

Such was my first view of Edinburgh. I descended again into her streets in a sort of stupor of admiration.

Excuse my troubling you with all this, now that I have written it; but do not be alarmed with any fear, lest I should propose to treat you with much more of the same kind of diet. I have no intention to send you a description of the cities and scenery of Scotland. I refer you *semel et simul* to Sir John Carr and our dear countryman Mr Pennant. I have always been "a fisher of men;" and here also, I promise you, I mean to stick to my vocation. But enough for the present.

Your's sincerely

P. M.

P. S.—I write from one of the most comfortable hotels I ever was in, and have already ascertained the excellence of the port.

LETTER II.

TO THE SAME.

OMAN'S, MARCH 6

DEAR DAVID,

Do you recollect Wastle of Trinity? I suspect not; but you have heard of him a thousand times. And yet you may have met him at my rooms, or North's; for I think he determined, after you began to reside. At all events, you remember to have heard me describe his strange eccentric character—his dissolute behaviour during the first years of his residence—his extravagant zeal of study afterwards—last of all, the absurdity of his sudden elopement, without a degree, after having astonished the examining masters by the splendid commencement of his examination. The man is half-mad in some things; and that is the key of the whole mystery.

Wastle and I were great friends during the

first terms I spent at Jesus. He had gone to school at Harrow with my brother Samuel, and called on me the very day I entered. What a life was ours in that thoughtless prime of our days! We spent all the mornings after lecture in utter lounging—eating ice at Jubb's—flirting with Miss Butler—bathing in the Charwell, and so forth. And then, after dinner, we used to have our fruit and wine carried into the garden, (I mean at Trinity,) and there we sat, three or four of us, sipping away for a couple of hours, under the dark refreshing shade of those old beechen bowers. Evensong was no sooner over, than we would down to the Isis, and man one, or sometimes two of Mother Hall's boats, and so run races against each other, or some of our friends, to Iffley or Sandford. What lots of bread and butter we used to devour at tea, and what delight we felt in rowing back in the cool misty evening—sometimes the moon up long ere we reached Christ Church meadows again. A light supper—cheese-and-bread and lettuces—and a joyous bowl of Bishop—these were the regular conclusion. I would give half I am worth to live one week of it over again. At that time, Wastle and I, Tom Vere (of Corpus,) and one

or two more, were never separate above three or four hours in the day.

I was on my way to deliver a letter of introduction to a young barrister of this place, when, in turning the corner of a street, my old friend, Will Wastle, passed close at my elbow. I knew him in a moment, although he is greatly changed, and called after him. He turned round with a fierce air, as if loth to be disturbed, (for he was evidently up to the chin in meditation;) but, on recognising his ancient acquaintance, nothing could be more hearty than the kindness of his countenance. After a few hurried interrogations on both sides, diversified by scarcely any responses on either, I took his arm and began to explain to him the purposes of my visit to a city in which he had so little expectation of seeing me. He accompanied me immediately to the Calton Hill, of which I spoke in my last, and where, as he assured me, he spends at least one hour every day when in Edinburgh. On coming down he carried me to the Hotel where I now am; and, having seen my baggage and horses fairly established, and walked a good deal about the town, we proceeded to his house, where I remained for the rest of the day. I assure

you this rencounter has afforded me the highest pleasure, and I doubt not it will be of infinite use to me, moreover—for Wastle is perhaps, of all men, the very person I should have selected to act as my Cicerone in Scotland. Indeed, I wonder at myself for not having made more accurate enquiries about him before I set out; but I had somehow got a confused idea in my head that he was resident in France or Germany, and really had never thought of him in relation to my own schemes of visiting his country. He has already introduced me to several very pleasant fellows here. But before I describe his companions, I must endeavour to give you some little notion of himself.

After leaving Oxford under the strange circumstances you have often heard me speak of, he proceeded to the North, where he spent several years in severe study, not a whit discouraged in his views, or shaken from his attachments, by the singular catastrophe to which the constitutional and irresistible panic of a moment had exposed him. He changed, however, but indeed it was scarcely possible for him to do otherwise, the course and tenor of his usual pursuits; passing for a time from the classics, with

the greater part of whom he had formed a pretty accurate acquaintance, and flinging himself over head and ears into the very heart of Gothic antiquities, and the history, poetry, and romance of the middle ages. These he has quitted by fits and starts, and spent the intervals of their neglect in making himself far better skilled than is common in the modern literature of foreign countries, as well as of England; but ever since, and up to this moment, they form the staple of his occupation—the daily bread of his mind. He lives almost continually in the days gone by, and feels himself, as he says, almost a stranger among matters which might be supposed to be nearer to him. And yet he is any thing but a stranger to the world he actually lives in; although indeed he does perhaps regard not a few both of its men and its things, with somewhat of the coldness of an unconcerned visitor. In short, for there is no need to disguise the fact to you, he has nursed himself into such a fervent veneration for the thoughts and feelings of the more ancient times of his country and of ours, (for as to that matter he is no bigot,) that he cannot witness, without a deep mixture of bile, the adoration paid by those around him to

thoughts, feelings, and persons, for whom he entertains, if not absolute, at the least no inconsiderable comparative contempt. I have said that he is not a bigot, in regard to any old ideas of difference between his own country and ours. This I attribute in a great measure, certainly, to the course of study he has so devoutly pursued, and which could not have failed, in making him acquainted with the ancient condition of both countries, to reveal to him far more points of agreement than disagreement between them. But a part of his liberality must also, I should think, be ascribed to the influence of his education in England, more particularly in Oxford; his long residence in that noble city having filled the finest part of his mind with reverent ideas, concerning both the old and the present grandeur of England, such as can never be eradicated, nor even weakened, by any after experience of his life. Such, I suspect, from his conversation, to be the truth of the case; and yet it is only from odd hints and suggestions, that I have made shift to gather so much, for, of all men living, he is the least chargeable with the sin of dissertation, and I never heard him in my life give more than one sentence to the expression of any opinion he entertains.

Having now succeeded to the family estate, which is a very ancient, and a tolerably productive one, he feels himself perfectly at liberty to pursue whatever mode of life is most agreeable to his fancy. He has travelled a good deal on the continent of Europe, and even penetrated into Asia Minor and Egypt, as far up as the Pyramids. These journies, however, could only have been undertaken for the purpose of gratifying some very ardent curiosity, in regard to a few particular points connected with his former devotedness to classical learning; and he now declares, that, unless he should be tempted to visit Spain for the sake of her cathedrals, he will never again leave the white cliffs behind him. He makes an annual or biennial trip to London; but, with this exception, he is always to be found either at his old castle in Berwickshire, or here in Edinburgh, where he has a very snug house, although by no means in a fashionable part of the town. From a feeling of respect for his ancestors, he refuses to quit the old family-residence, which is no other than a lodging up five pair of stairs, in one of those huge aerial edifices of the Old Town—edifices which sometimes contain beneath a single roof a population, layer above layer, household above household,

more numerous than that of many a street in many a city south of the "ideal line." Here Wastle still sits in the same enormously stuffed and prodigiously backed elbow-chair, and still reposes beneath the same antediluvian testers which served his grandfather, his great-grandfather, and all his generations back, for aught I know, to the days of Queen Mary; it being on many occasions his most chosen boast, that the degradation which affects, in other houses, the blood of the race, has touched in his house nothing but their furniture, and has not totally destroyed even that.

My friend ushered me into this remarkable habitation of his, not only without the least symptom of shame for its apparent obscurity, and the equally apparent filth of its approach, but with a certain air of proud and haughty satisfaction, as if he would have been ashamed to have conducted me to one of the newer, more commodious, and more elegant houses we had seen in the New Town. "The times are changed," says he, "since my grandfather, the Lord of Session, used to see all the ladies of quality in Edinburgh in this old-fashioned *habitaculum*. I desire to see none of them here now. I have a tailor for my neighbour immediately below me—

a cobbler—a tallow-chandler—a dancing-master—a grocer—and a cow-feeder, are all between me and the street; and above, God knows what store of washerwomen—French teachers—auctioneers—midwives—seamstresses—and students of divinity, are between me and the chimney-top. But no matter. I have some claret, which is not too old to be tasteable; and I shall make an endeavour to give you, at least, as good commons as you were used to at the Bachelor's table of Trinity."

I had no reason to complain of his fare, although I confess, when the covers were first removed, I was not without some apprehensions, that it might prove as Methuselamitish as his dwelling. Whether that might, or might not be, the provender was excellent. It consisted, *primo*, of broth made from a sheep's head, with a copious infusion of parsley, and other condiments, which I found more than palatable, especially after, at my host's request, I added a spoonful or two of Burgess to it.

Secundo, came the aforementioned sheep's head in *propria persona*—the hair having been taken off, not by the knife, but by the hot-iron, and the skin retaining from this operation, not only an inky hue, which would astound an Exmoorian,

but a delicious, oily, fragrant *gusto*, worthy of being transferred, *me judice*, to the memorandum-book of Beauvilliers himself. These being removed, then came a leg of roasted mutton, five years old at the least, from the Castlemains of Wastle. A dish of pancakes, very finely powdered with sugar, brought up the rear of the dinner, every five minutes of which we washed down with a glass of rare sherry, as ancient as Falstaff, or Johannisberg, which my friend had imported himself from the very cellars of Metternich. A ewe-milk cheese, which I found as good as any thing that ever came from the Pays de Vaud, and a glass of ale, such as I could not beat even in Cardigan, formed a sort of appendage to the feast; and just before the cloth was drawn, I tasted, for the first time, a liqueur, which I prefer vastly to all the Marasquin—ay, to all the Curaçoa in existence—the genuine Usquebaugh of Lochaber. Our Chateau-la-fitte and olives went down after this repast like very nectar and ambrosia. But you will say, I am a gourmand even upon paper.

To conclude with a portrait of my entertainer. —William Wastle is a pale faced, grave-looking, thin gentleman, of forty years old, or thereby. He has a stoop in his gait, and walks with his

toes in; but his limbs seem full of sinew, and he is of a seemly breadth across the back. He uses to wear a hat of singular broad brims, like a Quaker, for the convenience of shadow to his eyes, which are weak, though piercing. These he farther comforts and assists by means of a pair of spectacles, of the pure crystalline in winter, "but throughout the sunny portion of the year," green. His nose is turned up somewhat at the point, as it were disdainfully. His lips would be altogether indiscernible, but for the line of their division; and can call up in no mind (unless, perchance, on the principle of contrast) any phantasy either of cherry or rose-bud, to say nothing about bees. This yellow visage of his, with his close firm lips, and his grey eyes shining through his spectacles, as through a burning-glass, more brightly—the black beard not over diligently shorn—all lurking under the projecting shadow of that strange brim, compose such a physiognomy, as one would less wonder to meet with in Valladolid, than in Edinburgh. It is plain, yet not ugly. It is monastic, yet it is not anchoretic. It is bitter, and yet it wants not gleams of sheer good humour. In short, it belongs, and only could belong, to the nervous, irritable, enthusiastic, sarcastic William Wastle.

The years which had passed since our parting, had exaggerated the lines of this countenance, and entirely removed every vestige of its bloom. But the features were too marked to have undergone any essential alteration; and after dinner, when some half a dozen bumpers of claret had somewhat smoothed its asperities, I could almost have fancied myself to be once more transported back to the common-room of Trinity or Jesus.

To you, who know us of old, I need scarcely add, that two Oxonians meeting after such a separation, over such wine, were in no hurry to shorten their sederunt. I think it is very creditable to me, however, that I retained enough of my senses to be able to find my way to Oman's, without accepting, far less asking, either direction or assistance. Of course, I am too well-seasoned a cask to feel the smallest bad effects this morning. Quite the contrary: I have already swallowed three cups of coffee, as many rolls and eggs, and about a pound of excellent mutton-ham, and expect my old friend every moment to resume his functions as my *Lionizer*.

Ever your's,

P. M.

LETTER III.

TO THE SAME.

March 14.

Dear David,

If you knew what a life I have led since I wrote to you, you would certainly feel no difficulty in comprehending the reason of my silence. I thought my days of utter dissipation had been long since over, but I fear your clerical frown would have told me quite the reverse, had you been present almost any evening that has passed since my arrival in Edinburgh. I shall not shock you with any of the particulars; remember that you were once a layman yourself, and try to excuse about the worst you can imagine. What a glorious night we spent at your rooms the Saturday before you took orders!

I continue, notwithstanding all this, to pick up a vast deal of information concerning the present literary, political, and religious condition of this country; and I have already jotted down the heads of several highly valuable letters, in

which I design, ere long, to embody the *elite* of all my acquisitions for your benefit and that of Jack. Perhaps, however, the facts I have gathered may be nothing the worse for undergoing a more leisurely digestion in my own mind, before I think of conveying them to your's. Depend upon it, that I shall very soon put you in possession of more knowledge, touching Scotland, than was ever revealed to any wondering common-room, by any travelled or travelling tutor, since the days of Dr Johnson. So have patience.

Wastle was never more completely in his element, than when he took me to see Holyrood. You, who delight in honest enthusiasm, whatever be its object, would have been gratified beyond measure, with the high zealous air of dignified earnestness he assumed, long before we arrived even within sight of the old palace. From his own house, the way thither lies straight down the only great street of the Old Town—a street, by far the most impressive in its character, of any I have ever seen in Britain. The sombre shadows, cast by those huge houses of which it is composed, and the streams of faint light cutting the darkness here and there, where the entrance to some fantastic alley pierces the

sable mass of building—the strange projectings recedings, and windings—the roofs—the stairs—the windows, all so luxuriating in the endless variety of carved work; the fading and mouldering coats of arms, helmets, crests, coronets, supporters, mantles, and pavilions; all these testimonials of forgotten pride, mingled so profusely with the placards of old clothes'-men, and every ensign of plebeian wretchedness; it is not possible to imagine more speaking emblems of the decay of a once royal city, or a more appropriate avenue to a deserted palace. My friend was at home in every nook of this labyrinth. I believe he could more easily tell in what particular house of the Canongate any given lord or baron dwelt two hundred years ago, than he could in what street of the new city his descendant of the present day is to be found. It was quite marvellous with what facility he expounded the minutest hieroglyphics which had, no doubt, once been visible on shields of which my eye could now see nothing but rough outlines and smooth surfaces. "Ha!" said he, "the crescents and the sheaves!" pointing to a tall thin building, from the windows of which sundry patches of wet linen hung dangling over our heads—"the crescents within the tressure—the

sheaves—and the sword in pale on the escutcheon of pretence—this was once the palace of the Seatons—*Oh! domus antiqua, heu! quam dispari dominare domino!*" A little on, the heart and Stars of Douglas—the Lymphads of Argyle—the Lion of Dundas, and I know not how many monsters of how many chieftains, were all saluted in their turn with like exclamations of reverence. He directed my attention to a building of prodigious elevation on the right, altogether having very much the appearance of the more ancient hotels in Paris, and informed me that here was the residence of the Hamiltons, after they had left their house without the walls, in the time of James VI.; "and here," said he, pointing right forwards, "is Holyrood. You are already within the liberty, for we have crossed the strand."

At first sight, this ancient habitation has truly a great deal of royalty in its aspect. Two huge square towers; one many centuries older than the other, but still sufficiently like to balance each other nobly; a low curtain between these, and, in the centre, a spacious gateway under a lofty canopy, somewhat after the fashion of a crown imperial, the whole of fine old grey stone; in front, an open esplanade, paved with massy pieces of granite, and a few kilted gre-

nadiers loitering about the gate—all had an appearance of neglected majesty, which I could not help feeling to be abundantly impressive. The Laird uncovered himself as we stept into the porch, and I saw, by his manner, that I should sorely offend him by omitting the same mark of veneration. Within, I found a melancholy quadrangle, for the most part of a noble architecture, but all over as black as if the sun had never shone upon it since the death of Queen Elizabeth. An ancient gentlewoman, with whom my friend seemed to be on terms of infinite familiarity, undertook forthwith to conduct us over the interior. Here, but for the power of memory, and it may be of imagination, I suspect there would not, after all, be much to merit particular attention. The gallery is long and stately, but the vile daubs of Fergus I. and his progenitors, entirely disfigure it. The adjoining apartments of Queen Mary, now appropriated to the use of the family of Hamilton, are far from noble in their dimensions; but there is a genuine air of antique grandeur in the hangings and furniture of the inner apartments, none of which have been changed since the time of the most unfortunate of Queens and Beauties—and this is enough to atone for every thing. In

the state-room also, the attendant pointed out a cypher, which she said was Mary's, but Wastle told me, that, in fact, that room had been last fitted up for Charles I., and that the cypher was composed of his initials, and those of his Queen Henrietta Maria. Here, then, is the bed in which Mary slept with Darnley—the closet where Rizzio was murdered—the ante-chamber in which Knox insulted his sovereign, and made it his boast that he "cared little for the pleasant face of a gentlewoman." There are some portraits, and one exquisite one of Mary herself—I mean an exquisitely beautiful portrait of some exquisite beauty—for as to the real features of the lovely Queen, he must be a more skilful antiquarian than I pretend to be, who could venture any guess with respect to them. Even her eyes are represented of many different colours; but this I only take as an evidence, that they were of that most delicious of all hues, if hue it may be called, that is as changeful as the cameleon—the hazel. I think it is Mackenzie that raves somewhere so delightfully about those softest, and yet most queen-like of eyes. They have not indeed the dazzling sparkle of the Jewish or Italian black, neither have they the vestal calmness of the blue—but they are the only eyes

in the world that have the watery swimming lustre of conscious weakness—and when they can change this for the fire of command, and flash annihilation from their contracting lids, what eyes can be compared to them?—what eyes could be so fitting for Mary?

The portrait is very beautiful indeed, but it is only a miniature, and by no means satisfies my imagination so much as that in the picture gallery of the Bodleian. There is nothing I should like better than to ascertain the real history of that painting. It is so softly executed, that, at first sight, one would suppose it to be done in water colours, and to be covered with a glass. But it is in oils, and on a very old piece of oak (for I once took it down to examine it.) It strikes me, that they used to tell some story about its having been painted by a nun before Mary left France; but I suspect the tradition of its history is very vague and uncertain. I think, however, the picture carries much more of the air of reality about it than any I have seen. What luxurious pensiveness in the lips! what irresistible melting radiance in the eyes—the eye-lids how beautifully oval; the eye-lashes how long, how tender! there was nobody ever invented the like except Correggio . . . . . But I forget that I

am not talking to the Laird of Wastle, who would fain, if he could, make not only a beauty, but a saint of her.

There is also a fine portrait of Charles I.—one of the many, many masterly Vandykes. The king is in a riding habit; he has the same indescribable look of majesty and melancholy which makes it impossible for any man to look upon it without wondering by what process of brutalizing, even a Cromwell or a Bradshaw should ever have learned to regard the original without the reverence of humility. How could any common mortal feel otherwise than abashed in the presence of that "grey discrowned head?" —And Charles kept his court here too for a time, and Laud preached, and Rothes flattered, and the Presbyterians themselves looked smoothly on all the pageants of his state. What a different kind of journey he lived to make hither, and what a different kind of return to his Whitehall!

Some spacious, but uncomfortable looking apartments in the newer part of the quadrangle, were occupied by the Bourbon princes during their stay here. I saw the *Prie-dieu* used by Monsieur, and many other little relics of their Catholic devotion; but in truth, I neither felt, nor pretended to feel, either curiosity or interest about

tracing the footsteps of these gentlemen. I have seen these younger sprigs of the lily, and with all my respect for the good old king himself, I wish the lily were rid of a few of its incumbrances. I shall write very soon again, and I hope in a more amusing way.

Your's ever,

P. M.

P. S.—I forgot to mention the only inhabitants of this Palace, or rather of its precincts, are gentlemen, who find it convenient to take advantage of the sanctuary still afforded by the royalty of the soil. All around the Palace itself, and its most melancholy garden, there are a variety of little miserable patchwork dwellings, inhabited by a considerable population of gentry, who prefer a residence here to one in a jail. They have abundance of room here within their limits, for the whole of Arthur's Seat is, I believe, considered as part of the royal domain. However, they emerge into the town of a Sunday; and I am told some of them contrive to cut a very fashionable figure in the streets, while the catch-poles, in obedience to the commandment, "rest from working."

LETTER IV.

TO THE SAME.

March 20.

I believe, that had I given myself up entirely to the direction of my friend the Laird, I should have known, up to this hour, very little about any part of Edinburgh more modern than the Canongate, and perhaps heard as little about any worthies she has produced since the murder of Archbishop Sharpe. He seemed to consider it a matter of course, that, morning after morning, the whole of my time ought to be spent in examining the structure of those gloomy tenements in wynds and closes, which had, in the old time, been honoured with the residence of the haughty Scottish barons, or the French ambassadors and generals, their constant visitors. In vain did I assure him, that houses of exactly the same sort were to be seen in abundance in the city of London, and that even I myself had been wearied

of counting the *fleurs-de-lis* carved on every roof and chimney-piece of a green-grocer's habitation in Mincing-lane. Of such food, in his estimation, there could be no satiety; every *land* had its coat-of-arms, and every quartering called up to his memory the whole history of some unfortunate amour, or still more unfortunate marriage —in so much that, had I taken accurate notes of all his conversation, I am persuaded I might, before this time, have been in a condition to fill more sheets than you might be likely to peruse, with all the mysteries of the *causes celebres*, or, to speak more plainly, of the Scandalous Chronicle of Scotland.—What horrors of barbarism—what scenes of murder, rape, incest—seem to have been the staple commodities of week-day life among these ferocious nobles! But, in good truth, I did not come to Scotland to learn such things as these; and although a little sprinkling of them might be very well in its way, I soon found it expedient to give my good friend a slight hint, that I wished he could contrive to afford me something else for the main woof of my meditations. . . . . He begins to understand my drift, and will, I think, learn to accommodate himself to my humour, *pas-a-pas*.

Notwithstanding all his devotion to the past, indeed, he is far from being an unconcerned or inept observer of more modern things—and I have already said as much. He is quite *au fait*, I have found, in regard to the history and performances of all the leading characters of the present day in Scotland; but, unless when questions are put to him, he seems, with a very few exceptions, to make a point of never alluding to their existence. It would appear as if he was not over anxious to remember that such people are; but when the conversation actually turns on them and their merits, he expresses himself apparently in no uncandid manner concerning the least—and in a tone of genuine admiration concerning the greatest of them. But I despair of making you comprehend the vagaries of such an original.

I wish you had a few minutes' use of the magical mirror, if it were only that you might enjoy one view of him, as he sits wrapped up in his huge blue velvet robe-de-chambre, with a night-cap of the same, dashing execrations by the dozen upon the whigs, the presbyterians, and the Edinburgh reviewers; for his splenetic imagination jumbles them all together—*disjecta*

membra poetae—in one chaos of abomination. Could one enter into his premises of prejudice, one might perhaps find less difficulty in joining in his sweeping sentences of conclusion. He considers whiggery as having been the ruin of the independence of his country, and as forming, at this moment, the principal engine for degrading the character of his countrymen. I own I am rather at a loss to discover what he means by "whiggery," (for he never deigns to give a definition;) and all I know of the matter is, that it is something for which he equally vituperates Mr Halkston of Rathillet, and Mr Francis Jeffrey,—two persons, between whom, I suspect, few other people would find many circumstances of resemblance,—and each of whom, I am quite sure, would disdain, with all his might, the idea of being coupled with the other. What you or I might be apt to designate by the same term, would, I am certain, coincide in very few points with any notion he may happen to affix to it. But, perchance, we may be able to get a little more light as we go on. In the mean time, Wastle has gone into the country for a few days, upon some of his county politics. I wished to have gone with him, but had caught a vile cold,

and did not care for aggravating it. I shall have more leisure to write during his absence; so expect a long letter next time.

P. M.

LETTER V.

TO LADY JOHNES.

Dear Aunt,

You ask me to speak more particularly concerning the external aspect and manners of the people among whom I am sojourning. I wish it were as easy for me to satisfy your curiosity on some other points mentioned in your last letter, as on this.

The Scots are certainly rather a hard-favoured race than otherwise; but I think their looks are very far from meriting the sort of common-place sarcasms their southern neighbours are used to treat them with. Indeed, no one who has seen a Scots regiment, as I should suppose you must have done, can possibly be of opinion that they are at all an ugly nation; although it is very likely he may be inclined to prefer the general appearance of some other nation or nations to

theirs. For my part, I am not without suspicion, that a little longer residence among them might teach me to become an absolute admirer of their physiognomies; at least, I am sensible, that the slight repugnance I felt for them at first, has already very considerably given way.

What the Scottish physiognomists are used to talk of, with the highest satisfaction, is the air of superior intelligence stamped on the faces of their countrymen of the lower orders of society; and indeed there is no question, a Scottish peasant, with his long dry visage, his sharp prominent cheekbones, his grey twinkling eyes, and peaked chin, would seem a very Argus, if set up close beside the sleek and ponderous chubbiness of a Gloucestershire farmer—to say nothing of the smarter and ruddier oiliness of some of our own country folks. As to the matter of mere acuteness, however, I think I have seen faces in Yorkshire, at least a match for any thing to be found further to the north. But the mere shrewdness of the Scotch peasant's face, is only one part of its expression; it has other things, I should imagine, even more peculiarly characteristic.

The best place to study their faces in is the kirk; it is there that the sharpness of their discernment

is most vehemently expressed in every line—for they are all critics of the sermon, and even of the prayers; but it is there also that this sharpness of feature is most frequently seen to melt away before emotions of a nobler order, which are no less peculiarly, though far less permanently theirs. It is to me a very interesting thing to witness the struggle that seems to be perpetually going on between the sarcastic and reverential elements of their disposition—how bitterly they seem to rejoice in their own strength, when they espy, or think they espy, some chink in the armour of their preacher's reasoning; and then with what sudden humility they appear to bow themselves into the dust, before some single solitary gleam of warm affectionate eloquence—the only weapon they have no power to resist. If I mistake not, it is in this mixture of sheer speculative and active hard-headedness, with the capacity of so much lofty enthusiasm concerning things intangible, that we must seek for the true differential quality of the Scottish peasants. I shall have abundant occasion to return to this hereafter.

The gentlemen of this part of the country have assuredly by no means the same advan-

tages over those of the south, which the Scotch peasants have over the English. I know not altogether to what these advantages enjoyed by the lower orders may be owing;—their better education is of course the first and most obvious source—their more sterile soil—and, consequently, their less luxurious life, may be others almost as efficient. Above all, the picturesque aspect of their ever various landscapes, cannot fail to exert a powerful influence on the opening mind of their youth. But in some of these things, at least, the peasantry of particular districts in England share abundantly, and I think there are some pretty extensive tracts on the continent where the whole of these circumstances, or very nearly so, are found acting together, without producing any such similarity of effect as might have been expected. I suspect that we must go further back if we would arrive at any satisfactory solution—Of this too hereafter.

The gentry, however, have no pretensions to a more intelligent exterior than their neighbours of the south. The truth is, that certain indications of worldly quicksightedness, which please on the face, and in the air of a peasant, produce quite a different effect when exhibited in the

case of a person of superior rank. One rather wishes to see these things kept under in the appearance of a person of education, than suspects their non-existence in the totality of his character. Without wanting their due proportion of the national enthusiasm, the Scottish gentry seem to shew much fewer symptons of it than those below them; and this is a sufficiently natural result of their sense of their own comparative importance. It is a result, notwithstanding, which tends to make any thing but a favourable impression on the mind of a stranger.

High and low, they are, for the most part, a race of tall, well-formed people; active of limb, and powerful of muscle; leaner by far than the English;—(for here a very fat man is stared at, and one of such bulk as is met with at every corner in London, must, it would seem, lay his account with a little quizzing from all his friends on the subject of his obesity.) In their gait and gestures, they have neither the vivacity of the Frenchman, nor the noble gravity of the Spaniard, nor the stable heavy vigour of the Englishman; but a certain grotesque mixture of elasticity and sedateness, which is sufficient to prove their descent from a hardy and warlike set of marauders, the effects of whose *subœthric* exist-

ence have not yet been washed out by any great influx of idleness or luxury; and, at the same time, under favour, to remind one with what zeal these progenitors exerted all their energies, in behalf of the most taciturn species of fanaticism that was ever made subservient to the purposes of ghostly ambition. When a man visits France, whether he be a believer or a despiser of the doctrine of the Spurzheims, he must look long around him before he can find any face which he could imagine to be the property of one lineally sprung from the loins of the Bayards and the Duguesclins, or, if you will, of the Harlays, and the Du Thous. But here the deterioration of the species, if such there be, has scarcely begun to tell upon their physiognomies; and you meet, at every step, persons who have that about them which would prevent you from being at all astonished, if you should be told immediately afterwards, that they could trace themselves, without difficulty, to the Burleighs and the Claverhouses,—I had almost said, the Bell-the-Cats, and the Kirkpatricks.

I have not, as yet, seen a great deal of the women. Those, even of the peasantry, seem, when young, to be comely and well complexioned; but it is a great mistake to suppose that they

are fairer than with us. And yet the testimony of travellers cannot be entirely despised; and if their report is in any degree a correct one, light hair, and light eyes, were almost universal at no very remote period. This is a circumstance that has often appeared to me to be very inadequately accounted for,—I mean the great and remarkable change that has taken place in the complexions not only of the Scotch, but of the English, and indeed of all the Gothic nations of Europe. When the Romans first became acquainted with the Germans and the Britons, there can be no question that both the gentlemen and the ladies of those nations had yellow locks and blue eyes; and you have heard, no doubt, that the Roman belles, stimulated, it is to be suspected, by the stories of their campaigning husbands and lovers, endeavoured, by a thousand tricks of the toilette, to muster charms as nearly as they could in the same taste. You well know, that the Messalinas and Poppæas used to cut off the finest black curls in the world, to make room for false *tetes* manufactured from the hair of the poor girls of the Sicambri and the Batavi, while others strove to produce the same sort of effect by means of hair-powder made of gold-dust, and washes, of more cunning chemis-

try than I would undertake to describe. Even in far later times, so late as Henry VIII. and Elizabeth, Erasmus and Paul Henztner represent the ladies of England as being, with very few exceptions, *blondes;* and such, if voyagers of less illustrious reputation "may be in aught believed," not much above a hundred years ago, were the far greater portion of the beaux and belles of Scotland.

"Sandy-haired" is still one of the standing epithets applied to the ideal Scot, by all inexperienced persons, who introduce any description of him into novels or satires—witness Churchill, and a thousand of less note; and I confess, that I was myself prepared to find the case much more as they have represented it, than I really have done. By looking around me at home, and remembering what the old writers had said of ourselves, I might have learned to be more suspicious of their accuracy; but the truth is, I had never taken the pains to think much about the matter. In fact, they are now as far from being a light-haired people as we are. I amused myself (God forgive me) with counting the number of fair heads last Sunday in a very crowded church, and, I assure you, they did not amount to one in fifty. There are

far more people here with locks of all but Israelitish blackness, than of any shade that could with propriety be called either white, yellow, or red; and the general hues are exactly the same variations of brown, between Bistre and Burnt Sienna, which we are accustomed to in the south.

I was at a large party yesterday evening—the first sight I have had of the gay world here—and had an opportunity of viewing, at my leisure, all the fashionable belles of the town. You always accuse me of being too undistinguishing an admirer; but, I am sure, even you would have allowed that there was no want of beauty. It is many years since I have been familiar with the *beau-monde* of London, but I do not believe I ever, in any one evening there, saw a greater number of fine women, and of very different kinds too. I had heard before I went that I should see Miss*****, the same celebrated *star* of whom you have so often heard Sir Thomas speak, and who, indeed, cannot shew herself anywhere, even in this unromantic age, without leaving an uneffaceable impression on all that behold her. I confess the description the knight used to give of her appeared to me to be a little high-flown; but "seeing is believ-

ing"—the world has assuredly only one *****. I looked round a room crowded with lovely women, but my eye was fixed in a moment; and I never thought of asking which was she. The first view I had was a profile. I had no suspicion that nature could still form countenances upon that heavenly model. The forehead, high and clear, descends almost without a curve into the nose, and that again drops into the mouth with such bold defined elegance of lineament, as I should scarcely have believed to be copied from living beauty, had I met with it in some masterpiece of sculpture. The lips have such a delicate precision of form, and such an expression of divine simplicity in their smile, that one could almost believe they had never admitted any grosser diet than ambrosia; but the full oval sweep of the cheek and chin, and the mode in which these are carried down into the neck, are, perhaps, the most truly antique parts of the whole. And then such hair—such long luxurious tresses of radiant brown, braided with such serene grace upon that meek forehead! If you have seen Canova's *testa d'Helena*, you may form some notion of those most exquisite curls. The colour of her eyes I could not ascertain: I suspect they are dark grey, or

hazel; but the redundant richness of her eye-lashes gives them all that glossy splendour which oriental beauties borrow from their Sirmē. But, indeed, colour is a small matter in eyes enchased so deeply beneath such majestic brows. I think Lucretius himself would have admitted, that the spirit must be immortal on which so glorious a tenement has been bestowed!

With this divine exception, I must do the men the justice to say, that the most beautiful women in the room were all matrons. Had she been absent, there were two or three of these on whom all my enthusiasm might well have been expended; and one, Mrs **********, whose graceful majesty was such, that when I met her next evening in a smaller assembly, I almost began to suspect myself of having been too exclusive in my deification. But I have already said more than I should have ventured on to almost any other of your sex—a great deal more than I should have dared to write, far less speak to my cousin,—to whom I beg you will present the humble duty of

Her slave,

&c. &c.

P. M.

P. S. By way of pleasing Jane, you may tell her that I do not think the Scottish ladies are at all good dressers. They are very gorgeous—I never saw such a display of crimson velvet, and ostrich feathers, and diamond necklaces, except once at a birth-day. But the fashions have a long cold journey before they reach Edinburgh, and I think they do not regain the same easy air which they have before they begin their travels. They are apt to overdo every thing, particularly that vilest and most unnatural of all fashions, the saddle—or I know not what you call it—which is at present permitted to destroy so much of the back, and indeed, to give so much meanness to the whole air. They say the scrophula brought in the high shirt collars of the men—and the Spectator gives some equally intelligible account of the fardingale. Pray, what hunch-backed countess was she that had wit enough to bring the saddle into vogue? I think all the three fashions are equally abominable, and the two of them that still remain should be voted out by the clean-skinned and straight-backed, who, I hope, are still the major part of the community. But, *ne sutor ultra crepidam* * * *

P. M.

LETTER VI.

TO THE REV. DAVID WILLIAMS.

Dear David,

Although my sole purpose, or nearly so, in coming to Scotland, was to see and converse with the illustrious men who live here, I have been in Edinburgh for a fortnight, and can scarcely say that I have as yet seen even the faces of most of them. What with lounging about in the mornings with Wastle, and claret in the evening, and routs and balls at night, I fear I am fast getting into a very unprofitable life. The only very great man here, to whom I had letters of introduction, was Mr Scott, and he happened to go out of town for a few weeks, I believe the very day after my arrival. I forwarded my letter to him in the country, however, and he has invited me to pay him a visit there, at the castle he has just built upon the banks of

the Tweed. My friends have been so attentive, however, as to send me letters for Mr Mackenzie the Man of Feeling, Mr Jeffrey, Mr Playfair, and several other men of note, on both sides of the question; so that I shall now see as much as I please of all the Dons. I shall take the opportunity of Wastle's absence, to call upon all these gentlemen; for, excepting Mr Scott and Mr Mackenzie, he has no acquaintance with any of them. I believe, indeed, there is little love lost between him and them—and I wish to see things with my own eyes.

Of all the celebrated characters of this place, I rather understand that Jeffrey is the one whom travellers are commonly most in a hurry to see—not surely, that the world, in general, has any such deep and abiding feeling of admiration for him, or any such longing to satisfy their eyes with gazing on his features, as they have with regard to such a man as Scott, or even Steuart; but I think the interest felt with respect to him is of a more vivacious and eager kind, and they rush with all speed to gratify it—exactly as men give immediate vent to their petty passions, who have no difficulty, or rather, indeed, who have a sort of pleasure, in nursing silently, and concealing long, those of a more serious and grave im-

portance. A few years ago, I should perhaps have been more inclined to be a sharer in this violent sort of impatience; but even now I approached the residence of Mr Jeffrey with any feelings assuredly rather than those of indifference.

He was within when I called, and in a second I found myself in the presence of this bugbear of authors. He received me so kindly, (although, from the appearance of his room, he seemed to be immersed in occupation,) and asked so many questions, and said and looked so much, in so short a time, that I had some difficulty in collecting my inquisitorial powers to examine the person of the man. I know not how, there is a kind of atmosphere of activity about him; and my eyes caught so much of the prevailing spirit, that they darted for some minutes from object to object, and refused, for the first time, to settle themselves even upon the features of a man of genius—to them, of all human things, the most potent attractions.

I find that the common prints give a very inadequate notion of his appearance. The artists of this day are such a set of cowardly fellows, that they never dare to give the truth as it is in

nature; and the consequence is, after all, that they rather take from, than add to, the impressiveness of the faces they would flatter. What a small matter is smoothness of skin, or even regularity of feature, in the countenance that Nature has formed to be the index of a powerful intellect? Perhaps I am too much of a connoisseur to be a fair judge of such matters; but I am very sure, that the mere handsomeness of a great man is one of the last things about him that fixes my attention. I do not wish, neither, to deny, that, when I first saw Goethe, the sublime simplicity of his Homeric beauty—the awful pile of forehead—the large deep eyes, with their melancholy lightnings—the whole countenance, so radiant with divinity, would have lost much of its power, had it not been, at the same time, the finest specimen of humanity I had ever beheld; neither would I conceal the immeasureable softness of delight which mingled with my reverence, when I detected, as if by intuition, in the midst of the whole artists of St Luke's, the Hyperion curls, and calm majestic lineaments, which could be nobody's but Canova's. But although beauty never exists in vain, there is nothing more certain than that its absence is scarcely perceived

by those who are capable of discovering and enjoying the marks of things more precious than beauty. Could all our countrymen of the present time, of very great reputation for talents or genius, be brought together into a single room, their physiognomies would, I doubt not, form as impressive a groupe as can well be imagined; but, among the whole, there would scarcely be more than one face which any sculptor might be ambitious of imitating on marble. Jeffrey's countenance could not stand such a test. To catch the minutest elements of its eloquent power, would, I think, be a hard enough task for any painter, and indeed, as I have already told you, it has proved too hard a task for such as have yet attempted it.

It is a face which any man would pass without observation in a crowd, because it is small and swarthy, and entirely devoid of lofty or commanding outlines—and besides, his stature is so low, that he might walk close under your chin or mine without ever catching the eye even for a moment. However, he is scarcely shorter than Campbell; and some inches taller than Tom Moore, or the late Monk Lewis. I remember Lord Clarendon somewhere takes no-

tice, that in his age, (the prime manhood of English intellect, as Coleridge calls it,) a very large proportion of the remarkable men were very short in stature. Such, if my memory serves me, were Hales, and Chillingworth, and Sidney Godolphin, and Lord Falkland himself, who used, I think, to say, that it was a great ingredient into his friendship for Mr Godolphin, that he was pleased to be in *his* company, where he was the properer man. In our own time, we have more than one striking instance of the "*Mens magna in corpore parvo*;—Buonaparte himself for one; and by the way, he is the only little man I ever saw, who seemed to be unconscious, or careless, or disdainful of the circumstance. Almost all other persons of that description appear to labour under a continual and distressing feeling that nature has done them injustice, and not a few of them strive to make up for her defects, by holding their heads as high as possible, and even giving an uncomfortable elevation or projection to the chin, all which has a very mean effect upon their air and attitude, and is particularly hurtful to the features of the face, moreover,—because it tends to reverse the arrangement of Nature, and to throw

all those parts into light which she has meant to be in shade. It is exactly the same sort of thing that we all remark on the stage, where the absurd manner in which the lamps are placed, under the feet of the performers, has such a destructive effect, that few actors, except those of the Kemble blood, appear to have any better than snub noses. Now, Napoleon has not the least of this trick; but, on the contrary, carries his head almost constantly in a stooping posture, and so preserves and even increases the natural effect of his grand formation about the eyebrows, and the beautiful classical cut of his mouth an chin—though, to be sure, his features are so fine that nothing could take much from their power.—But, to come back to our own small men, Jeffrey has a good deal of this unhappy manner, and so loses much of what his features, such as they are, might be made to convey.

I have heard many persons say, that the first sight of Mr Jeffrey disappointed them, and jarred with all the ideas they had previously formed of his genius and character. Perhaps the very first glance of this celebrated person produced something of the same effect upon my own

mind; but a minute or two of contemplation sufficed to restore me to the whole of my faith in physiognomy. People may dispute as much as they please about particular features, and their effect, but I have been all my life a student of "the human face divine," and I have never yet met with any countenance which did not perfectly harmonize, so far as I could have opportunity of ascertaining, with the intellectual conformation and habits of the man that bore it. But I must not allow myself to be seduced into a disquisition—I shall rather try my hand at a portrait.

Mr Jeffrey, then, as I have said, is a very short, and very active-looking man, with an appearance of extraordinary vivacity in all his motions and gestures. His face is one which cannot be understood at a single look—perhaps it requires, as it certainly invites, a long and anxious scrutiny before it lays itself open to the gazer. The features are neither handsome, nor even very defined in their outlines; and yet the effect of the whole is as striking as any arrangement either of more noble or more marked features, which ever came under my view. The forehead is very singularly shaped, describing in

its bend from side to side a larger segment of a circle than is at all common; compressed below the temples almost as much as Sterne's; and throwing out sinuses above the eyes, of an extremely bold and compact structure. The hair is very black and wiry, standing in ragged bristly clumps out from the upper part of his head, but lying close and firm lower down, especially about the ears. Altogether it is picturesque, and adds to the effect of the visage. The mouth is the most expressive part of his face, as I believe it is of every face. The lips are very firm, but they tremble and vibrate, even when brought close together, in such a way as to give the idea of an intense, never-ceasing play of mind. There is a delicate kind of sneer almost always upon them, which has not the least appearance of ill-temper about it, but seems to belong entirely to the speculative understanding of the man. I have said, that the mouth is the most expressive part of his face—and, in one sense, this is the truth, for it is certainly the seat of all its rapid and transitory expression. But what speaking things are his eyes! They disdain to be agitated with those lesser emotions which pass over the lips; they reserve their fierce and dark energies

for matters of more moment; once kindled with the heat of any passion, how they beam, flash upon flash! The scintillation of a star is not more fervid. Perhaps, notwithstanding of this, their repose is even more worthy of attention. With the capacity of emitting such a flood of radiance, they seem to take a pleasure in banishing every ray from their black, inscrutable glazed, tarn-like circles. I think their prevailing language is, after all, rather a melancholy than a merry one—it is, at least, very full of reflection. Such is a faint outline of this countenance, the features of which (to say nothing at all of their expression,) have, as yet, baffled every attempt of the portrait-painters; and which, indeed, bids very fair, in my opinion, to leave no image behind it either on canvass or on copper. A sharp, but, at the same time, very deep-toned and impressive voice—a very bad pronunciation, but accompanied with very little of the Scotch accent—a light and careless manner, exchanged now and then for an infinite variety of more earnest expression and address—this is as much as I could carry away from my first visit to "the wee reekit deil," as the Inferno of Altesidora has happily called him. I have since

seen a great deal more of him, and have a great deal more to tell you, but my paper is done.

P. M.

P. S. I am to dine with Jeffrey to-morrow at his country house, about three miles from Edinburgh, and shall give you a full account of the party in my next.

LETTER VII.

TO THE SAME.

Dear David,

Since I came to this town the weather has in general been of a very unpleasant kind. When you look out from the windows of your apartment, nothing can be finer than the appearance every thing presents. The air is as clear as amber overhead, and the sun shines with so much power, that in these splendid streets, the division of the bright from the shadowy part, reminds one of the richest effects of a Cuyp, or a Sachtleeven. But when you come out, in the full trust inspired by this brilliant serenity of aspect, you find yourself woefully disappointed. The action of the sun and air upon the nerves, is indeed de-

lightfully stimulant; but the whole charm is destroyed before you have time to enjoy it, by some odious squall of wind which cuts you to the teeth—and what is worse, comes loaded with a whole cloud of flying dust and gravel, which is sure to leave its traces behind it, on still more delicate parts of your physiognomy. As for myself, I am often obliged to walk with a handkerchief held before my eyes—and in spite of all my precautions, I have been several times in such a state, that I have absolutely rubbed myself blind. The whole of this arises from the want of watering the streets—a thing which might surely be accomplished without the least difficulty, by a subscription among the inhabitants. If this evil be so severe at present, what must it be in the dog-days?—and yet the people submit to it all quietly in streets, below every one of which, they know water is flowing in pipes, ready to be scattered *ad libitum*, and at an expense not worthy of being mentioned.—"*O! cœcas hominum mentes!*"

Yesterday, however, there was an unusual degree of quietness in the state of the atmosphere. A slight shower, which fell in the morning, had laid the most offensive part of the dust,

without giving the least appearance of damp to the roads—and I drove to Craigcrook, Mr Jeffrey's villa, *molto gustosamente*—the expectation of the manifold luxuries I hoped to enjoy there—the prospective delights both of palate and intellect—being heightened and improved by the preliminary gratification I tasted, while the shandrydan rolled along between the refreshed green of the meadows and corn-fields. His house is an old turreted mansion, much patched in the whole mass of its structure, and, I believe, much increased in its accommodations since he entered upon possession of it. The situation is extremely beautiful. There are very few trees immediately about the house; but the windows open upon the side of a charming hill, which, in all its extent, as far as the eye can reach, is wooded most luxuriantly to the very summit. There cannot be a more delicious rest for the eyes, than such an Arcadian height in this bright and budding time of the year; but, indeed, where, or at what time, can a fine wood be looked upon without delight? Between the wood and the house, there is a good garden, and some fields, in the cultivation of which Mr Jeffrey seems to take much pleasure; for I had no

sooner arrived, than he insisted upon carrying me over his ditches and hedges to shew me his method of farming; and, indeed, talked of Swedish turnip, and Fiorin grass, and red-blossomed potatoes, in a style that would have done no dishonour to your friend Curwen himself. I had come, thanks to my rustic ignorance, exactly at the hour appointed for dinner, (five o'clock,) so that I had three parts of an hour of the great man entirely to myself—during the whole of which space he continued to talk about rural affairs, and to trot me up one field and down another, till I was weary, without (*credite posteri!*) making one single allusion to law, politics, or literature.

We were joined towards six o'clock by Professors Playfair and Leslie, and one or two young advocates, who had walked out with them. Then came Robert Morehead, whom you remember at Balliol, a relation and intimate friend of Mr Jeffrey's. He and the celebrated orator Alison officiate together in one of the Episcopalian chapels in Edinburgh. Although we never knew each other at Oxford, yet we immediately recognised each other's old High-Street faces, and began to claim a sort of acquaintance on that score,

as all Oxonian contemporaries, I believe, are accustomed to do, when they meet at a distance from their *alma mater*. There were several other gentlemen, mostly of grave years, so that I was not a little astonished, when somebody proposed a trial of strength in leaping. Nor was my astonishment at all diminished, when Mr Playfair began to throw off his coat and waistcoat, and to prepare himself for taking his part in the contest. When he did so much, I could have no apology, so I also stripped; and, indeed, the whole party did the same, except Jeffrey alone, who was dressed in a short green jacket, with scarcely any skirts, and, therefore, seemed to consider himself as already sufficiently "*accinctus ludo.*"

I used to be a good leaper in my day—witness the thousands of times I have beat you in the Port-Meadow, and elsewhere—but I cut a very poor figure among these sinewy Caledonians. With the exception of Leslie, they all jumped wonderfully; and Jeffrey was quite miraculous, considering his brevity of stride. But the greatest wonder of the whole was Mr Playfair. He also is a short man, and he cannot be less than seventy, yet he took his stand with the assurance of an athletic, and positively beat every one of us—the very best of us, at least half a

heel's breadth. I was quite thunderstruck, never having heard the least hint of his being so great a geometrician—in this sense of the word. I was, however, I must own, *agreeably* surprised by such a specimen of buoyant spirit and muscular strength in so venerable an old gentleman, and could not forbear from complimenting him on his revival of the ancient peripatetic ideas, about the necessity of cultivating the external as well as the internal energies, and of mixing the activity of the practical with that of the contemplative life. He took what I said with great suavity; and, indeed, I have never seen a better specimen of that easy hilarity and good humour, which sits with so much gracefulness on an honoured old age. I wish I could give you a notion of his face. It is not marked by any very striking features; but the unison of mildness of disposition, and strength of intellect in the expression, is too remarkable to be unnoticed even by a casual observer. His habits of profound thought have drawn some deep lines about his mouth, and given him a custom of holding his lips very closely shut, otherwise I suspect the whole countenance would have been nothing more than an amiable one; although the light eyes have certainly at times something very

piercing in their glance, even through his spectacles. The forehead is very finely developed—singularly broad across the temples, as, according to Spurzheim, all mathematical foreheads must be; but the beauty in that quarter is rather of an *ad clerum* character, or, as Pindar hath it,

——πρὸς τὸ πᾶν
Ἑρμηνέων χατίζει.

I, however, who really, in good earnest, begin to believe a little of the system, could not help remarking this circumstance; and more particularly so, because I found Mr Leslie's skull to possess many of the same features—above all, that of the breadth between the temples. This other great mathematician is a much younger man than Playfair; but his hair is already beginning to be grey. He is a very fat heavy figure of a man, with much more appearance of strength than of activity; and yet, although a bad leaper, by no means a slothful looking person neither. He has very large eyes, in shape not unlike Coleridge's, but without the least of the same mysterious depth of expression. Altogether, his face is one which, at first sight, you would pronounce to be merely a coarse one;

but in which, once informed to whom it belongs, you are at no loss to discover a thousand marks of vigorous intellect and fancy too. Of this last quality, indeed, his eyes are at all times full to overflowing. In the midst of the sombre gravity of his usual look, there are always little flashes of enthusiasm breaking through the cloud, and, I think, adorning it; and, in this respect, he forms a striking contrast to the calm tranquil uniformity of Mr Playfair's physiognomy and deportment. In thinking of this afterwards, I could not help recollecting a great many passages of richly-coloured writing in his scientific Essays in the Edinburgh Review, which I remember struck me at the time I first read them, as being rather misplaced. But this, perhaps, may be merely the effect of the sterile way of writing employed by almost all the philosophers of these late times, to which we have now become so much accustomed, that we with difficulty approve of any thing in a warmer taste, introduced into such kinds of disquisition. They managed these things better in Greece.

By and bye, we were summoned to the drawing-room, where we found several ladies with Mrs Jeffrey. She, you know, is an American, and Jeffrey went across the Atlantic for

her a few years ago, while we were at war with her country. She is a very pleasing person; and they have one extremely interesting little girl. Our host made no alteration in his dress, but joined the ladies exactly in his morning costume,—the little green jacket aforesaid, grey worsted pantaloons, and Hessian boots, and a black silk handkerchief. How had Grub-street stared to see the prince of reviewers in such a garb! The dinner was excellent—a glorious turbot and oyster-sauce for one thing; and (*sitesco referens*) there was no want of champaigne —the very wine, by the way, which I should have guessed to be Jeffrey's favourite. It is impossible to conceive of him as being a lover of the genuine old black-strap, or even of the quiet balminess of Burgundy. The true reviewing diet is certainly Champaigne moussu, and devilled biscuit. Had there been any blue stocking lady present, she would have been sadly shocked with the material cast of the conversation during dinner—not a single word about

"The sweet new poem

Most of the company, though al men of literary habits, seemed to be as alive to the delights of

the table, as if they had been "*let in*" (to use Dandie's phrase,) by Monsieur Viard,—knowing in sauces, and delightfully reviewing every glass before they would suffer it to go down. It put me in mind of some lines of my friend Wastle. 'Tis a bookseller that speaks—

> "The days of Tonson, Lintot, Curll, are over,
> 'Tis now your author's time to live on clover.
>
> The time's gone by when we our coaches kept,
> And authors were contented with umbrellas—
> When pairs of epic bards in hay-lofts slept,
> Too glad if cantos two could fill two bellies—
> When we could always dinner intercept,
> Unless the quire was covered—Happy fellows!
> When first a champaigne cork was taught to fly
> At a reviewer's touch—our reign was by."*

The introduction of the claret and desert made, for a long time, very little alteration in the subject matter of the discourse; but by degrees the natural feelings and interests of the company did begin to shine through the cloud of *babillage*, and various matters, in which I was much better pleased to hear their opinions, were successively tabled—none of them, how-

* Modern Dunciad, Canto II. MS.

ever, with the least appearance of what the Scotch very expressively call *fore-thought*. Every thing went on with the utmost possible facility, and, in general, with a very graceful kind of lightness. The whole tone of Mr Jeffrey's own conversation, indeed, was so pitched, that a *proser*, or a person at all ambitious, in the green-room phrase, to *make an effect*, would undoubtedly have found himself most grievously out of place. Amidst all this absence of "*preparation*," however, (for it is impossible to talk of conversation without using French words),—I have never, I believe, heard so many ideas thrown out by any man in so short a space of time, and apparently with such entire negation of exertion. His conversation acted upon me like the first delightful hour after taking opium. The thoughts he scattered so readily about him (his words, rapid, and wonderfully rapid as they are, appearing to be continually panting after his conceptions)—his thoughts, I say, were at once so striking, and so just, that they took in succession entire possession of my imagination, and yet with so felicitous a *tact* did he forbear from expressing any one of these too fully, that the reason was always kept in a pleasing kind of excitement, by the endeavour more

thoroughly to examine their bearings, It is quite impossible to listen to him for a moment, without recalling all the best qualities of his composition—and yet I suspect his conversation is calculated to leave one with even a higher idea of his mind, at least of its fertility, than the best of his writings. I have heard some men display more profoundness of reflection, and others a much greater command of the conversational picturesque—but I never before witnessed any thing to be compared with the blending together of apparently little consistent powers in the whole strain of his discourse. Such a power, in the first place, of throwing away at once every useless part of the idea to be discussed, and then such a happy redundancy of imagination to present the essential and reserved part in its every possible relation, and point of view—and all this connected with so much of the plain *sçavoir faire* of actual existence, and such a thorough scorn of mystification, it is really a very wonderful intellectual coalition. The largeness of the views suggested by his speculative understanding, and the shrewdness with which his sound and close judgment seems to scrutinize them after they are suggested—these alone would be sufficient to

make his conversation one of the most remarkable things in the world. But then he invests all this ground-work with such a play of fancy, wit, sarcasm, *persiflage*, every thing in that way except humour—which again, were they united in any person entirely devoid either of the depth or the justness of Jeffrey's intellect, would unquestionably render that person one of the most fascinating of all possible companions. The Stagyrite, who places his *summum bonum* in having one's faculties kept at work, would certainly have thought himself in Elysium, had he been so unfortunate as to discuss a flask of Chian in company with Mr Jeffrey.

The mere animal spirits of the man are absolutely miraculous. When one considers what a life of exertion he has led for these last twenty years; how his powers have been kept on the rack such a length of time with writing, and concocting, and editing reviews on the one hand, and briefs, and speeches, and journeys, and trials, and cross-questionings, and the whole labyrinth of barristership on the other—one cannot help being quite thunderstruck on finding that he has still reserved such a large fund of energy which he can afford and delight to lavish, when even

the comparative repose of his mind would be more than enough to please and satisfy every one. His vigour seems to be a perfect widow's cruise, bubbling for ever upwards, and refusing to be exhausted; swelling and spreading till all the vessels of the neighbourhood are saturated, and more than saturated, with the endless unwearied irrigation of its superfluous richness.

Mr Playfair was the only other person whose conversation made any very striking impression on me—but indeed this might well be the case, without the least reflection on the talents of those present. This gentleman's mode of talking is just as different as possible from his friend's—it is quietly, simply, unaffectedly sensible, and that is all one thinks of it at first—but by degrees he says things, which although at the moment he utters them, they do not produce any very startling effect, have the power to keep one musing on them for a long time after he stops—so that, even if one were not told who he is, I believe one would have no difficulty in discovering him to be a great man. The gravity of his years—the sweet unassuming gentleness of his behaviour—and the calm way in which he gave utterance to thoughts, about

which almost any other person would have made so much bustle—every thing about the appearance and manners of this serene and venerable old man, has left a feeling of quiet, respectful, and affectionate admiration upon my mind. I brought him into town in the shandrydan, and he has asked me to dine with him in the beginning of next week. I mean before the time, to go and hear him deliver one of his lectures, and shall tell you what I think of it—although, considering the subject of which he treats, you may perhaps feel no great anxiety to hear my opinion.

I declare the wine here is superb. I think some of Jeffrey's Château-Margout beats the lot you bought at Colonel Johnes's all to nothing—don't take this in dudgeon.

Ever your's,

P. M.

LETTER VIII.

TO THE REV. D. W.

OMAN'S, TUESDAY EVENING.

DEAR DAVID,

I am rather surprised that you should already begin to call upon me for disquisition, when you may well suppose I have still so many interesting descriptions to give you. I have now seen, not one or two, but a great number of those eminent persons who confer so much honour upon the present condition of Scotland, and of whom you yourself have so often talked to me in terms of ardent curiosity. I assure you, but indeed why should I waste words to do so, that the extraordinary talents of these men are as far as possible from losing by a close inspection of their manners. The tone of that society, which they have necessarily had so great a share in forming, is as free as possible from the influence of that spirit of jealousy and constraint which I have observed operating, in some other cities, in

such a way, as to prevent men of genius from doing justice to themselves, elsewhere than in their writings. Hereafter, indeed, I shall have occasion to say something of the spirit of party in Scotland, and to show with what destructive violence it attacks the very essence of cordial communion among some of the less considerable classes of society. Nay, I fear from what I already see, that I shall find some little occasion to lament the insidious and half unsuspected influences of the same spirit among those who should be more above its working. But in the social intercourse of most of the men of literary eminence whom I have as yet seen, the absence of all feeling of party appears to be quite as entire as that of some other, and yet more offensive feelings which are elsewhere sufficiently manifest in their effects; and the principles, as well as the reputation of the one of such men, appear to act in no other way upon the other, than as gentle stimulants of his intellect, and of his courtesy.

My friend Wastle, as I have already whispered, not only forms, but glories in forming, an exception to this sort of behaviour. He utterly hates a Whig and a Calvinist, and he has no scruple about saying as much upon every occasion. He abominates the style of complaisant

smoothness, with which some, who entertain many of his own opinions, are accustomed to treat those whom he calls by no better name than *the Adversaries;* and complains indeed with an air of gravity, which I should not have expected in any man of his understanding, that by this species of conduct, the *Great Cause itself,* (by which he means the cause of true religion and true patriotism, as united and inseparable), has sustained, is sustaining, and is likely to sustain injuries of a more dangerous character than its unassisted enemies alone could have any power of inflicting. He has a two-fold argument on this head. "In the first place," says he, "the utterly ignorant and uninformed, who must constitute the great majority of every nation, and the half ignorant and conceited, who constitute an infinitely larger proportion of the Scotch than of any other nation under heaven —and who, wherever they may be found, are a far more despicable, though no doubt, a more dangerous class than that upon which they think themselves entitled to look down—all these people, "thick as the leaves in Vallambrosa," are, in spite of themselves, mightily influenced in all things by the example of the few men of true genius and learning their country does contain.

They see the external kindness with which these men treat the persons of their enemies, and it is no wonder that they care not to make nice distinctions between persons and principles for themselves. In the second place, says he, the good cavalier himself cannot keep company with roundheads—no, nor the good son of the true church cannot consort in familiarity with the relics of the cold-blooded covenanters on the one hand, or with those of the equally cold-blooded sceptic and infidel tribe on the other, without losing somewhat of the original purity of his affectionate faith. For my part, he concludes, I will do no harm to others or to myself, by such rash and unworthy obsequiences." The plain English of all which is, perhaps, nothing more, than that my good friend is too great a bigot to be capable of feeling much happiness in the presence of men who differ from him on points which he considers as of so much importance, and that he is willing, in avoiding their company, to cover his true motives from his acquaintance, in part it may be from himself, by the assumption of others, to which, in truth, he has little legitimate pretension.

Be all this as it may, Wastle is, without doubt, the keenest tory in Scotland; indeed, I believe I

should not go far from the truth, should I say, that his Toryism both far more smells of the old cavalier school, and is far more keen and intolerant than that of any man of superior attainments, I ever met with on either side of the Tweed. A Scotsman of genuine talents, who sincerely entertains such opinions, may perhaps claim no inconsiderable indulgence, although the present condition of his country should affect him with feelings of aversion, almost of loathing, towards politicians of another kind, such as would be altogether unpardonable in an English Tory. In our part of the island, thank God, the pedigree of right thoughts has at no period been interrupted; and never, I firmly believe, did the venerable tree present a more imposing spectacle of bloom and vigour than at the present. In literature, as in every other walk of exertion and department of life, the Tories have, at least, their equal share of power and of honour. In the church, their principles are maintained by a mighty majority of a clergy, whom even their enemies will acknowledge to be the most learned in the world, and who, whatever may be their comparative deficiencies in some other respects, are certainly far more in-

timately connected with the thoughts and feelings of the most important classes of society, than any clerical body in Europe ever was; and therefore, it may be presumed, more likely to exert a continued and effectual influence upon the public mind of their country. In the law, where the encouragement for talent alone is such, that no man of high talents can be suspected of easily sacrificing his judgment for the hopes of favour, the superiority is almost as apparent as in the church, and Shepherd stands as much alone among the younger, as our excellent Chancellor does among the elder part of the profession. In literature, they have no lack of splendid names. They have an equal proportion of those who carry on the immediate and more noisy conflict; and a far over-balancing array of such as are likely to be remembered hereafter for the stable and enduring triumphs of their genius. They have Canning and Frere among the wits—they have Wordsworth and Coleridge in poetry—and they have the unwearied inexhaustible Southey in every thing. They have no reason either to be ashamed of their front, or apprehensive of their success; and therefore they can have no excuse for carrying further than is

absolutely necessary, the measure of their hostility towards those who do not muster beneath their banner. I before suspected in part, and I now have seen enough thoroughly to convince me, that in each and all of these points, this quarter of the island presents unhappily a contrast as striking as possible to the condition of our own.

I shall not at present enter upon any thing like a review of the past history of political feeling in Scotland, because I expect ere long to find myself better enabled than I now am to attempt something of this kind; and, at the same time, by laying before you the results of my inquiries into the nature both of the religion and the education of Scotland, to afford you somewhat of a key to its interpretation. In the meantime, however, nothing can be more certain than the superiority of the Whigs in the Scottish literature of the present day; nor is their superiority a whit less decisive in the law, the only profession which, in Scotland, exerts any great or general authority over the opinions of the higher classes of society. As for the church, of which I propose to give you a full account hereafter, and of which, in

regard to its influence among the mass of the people, I am inclined to entertain a very high respect,—the truth is, the clergy of Scotland are, at the present day, possessed of comparatively little power over the opinions of the best educated classes of their countrymen. One very efficient cause of this want of influence is, without doubt, the insignificant part they have of late taken in general literature; their neglect, in other words, their strange and unprecedented neglect of an engine, which, among a people whose habits at all resemble those of the present Scots, must ever be, of all others, the most extensive in its sway. Such as the influence of the churchmen is, they are all Presbyterians and Calvinists, and so, in spite of themselves, they are, and must be Whigs. A few, indeed, may endeavour to persuade themselves and others they are Tories; but they wear the cloak of Geneva, and they are the descendants of John Knox—and that is sufficient. They may, if they choose, attempt to depart from the views of their predecessors, but the whole history of their sect is against them; and the shrewd sagacity of those to whom they address themselves, will at all times find a pleasing exercise in drawing invi-

dious comparisons at their expense. But my business now is with the literati, and I am wandering from my text.

There never was any man more fitted, by the general structure of his genius, for seizing and possessing an extensive dominion over Scottish intellect, than David Hume. He was very nearly the *beau idéal* of the national understanding, and had he stood in any thing like the same relation to some other parts of the national character, without all question he might have produced works which would have been recognized by them as complete pictures of their mode of thinking and feeling, and which would, therefore, have obtained a measure of influence exactly coincident with the extent of their national existence. The defect of feeling in his composition, which has prevented his books from attaining the power which their genius might otherwise have commanded, was by no means hostile to the early diffusion of his celebrity; but it has acted with the force of a terrible lever, in pulling him down from that height of authority to which the spring of his originality at first elevated him. The empire which he at once framed to himself in the region of the specula-

tive understanding of his countrymen, has not, indeed, been taken away; but the tyrannous interference, by which this empire at first contrived almost to swallow up every authority in its vicinity, has now received many checks, and, I should hope, bids fair to be ere long entirely discontinued. The only points on which David's character seems to have found any room for ardent feeling, were the ideas of ancient loyalty and attachment to the blood of his native princes. This was a strange anomaly in the composition of so frigid an observer of human affairs. We hear it usually said, that it could have arisen only from the influence of early education; but even so, the wonder remains undiminished, how he, who threw off all other youthful prejudices with so much facility, should have continued to embalm this alone in the very recesses of his heart. I am rather inclined to be of opinion, that David had really persuaded himself, by the exercise of his speculative understanding, that the greatest danger, to which his country was likely to be exposed, would be nothing else than a too great dereliction of those ideas, on which the national character and constitution had been formed, and determined, in his capacity of phi-

losopher, to make use of his powers as a historian to controvert, and, if possible, counterbalance this perilous tendency of his times. In the mysteries of Revealed Religion, there was something so very offensive to the unsatiable inquisitiveness of his mind, that he could not so far overcome his aversion, as to allow of any free use of his judgment, in regard to the impropriety and impolicy of attacking ideas so interwoven with the essence of the national character both of Englishmen and Scotsmen. He therefore continued to write against Christianity, and, if his conscience visited him with any passing touches of contrition, as, indeed, I think his writings prove abundantly to have been the case, it is probable he contrived to re-instate himself in his own good graces, by reflecting on the zeal with which he had fought the good fight of loyalty. But the truth is, that his consolation, if such there might be, was a very deceitful thing; for David Hume had spared no pains in convulsing the whole soil, wherein feelings both religious and national had taken root; and others saw well enough, although he himself might not, the absurdity of his undertaking to preserve, in the midst of the ruin occasioned by his own exer-

tions, any particular item of that produce, for the sum total of which he had manifested so little reverence. In spite, therefore, of all his masterly genius—in spite of his style, unrivalled in English, or, perhaps, in any modern literature—and in spite, above all, of the attachment felt by a vast number of his readers, for the very notions whose advocate he is—in spite of all that nature and art could do, the devil has been too strong for David; and the Prince of Sceptics has himself been found the most potent instrument for diminishing, almost for neutralizing, the true and grave influence of the Prince of Historians.

The doctrine of trying every thing by the standard of mere utility, which was set on foot anew with so much success by David Hume, Adam Smith, and the other philosophers of their sect, was undoubtedly the most dangerous present ever conferred by men of high and powerful intellects upon the herd of the species. It is no wonder, that a doctrine, so flattering to the mean compass of every coarse understanding, should have been received with the utmost readiness by the whole crowd of *Scioli*. But it is to my mind a very great wonder, that a person of such fine acumen as David Hume, should not

have foreseen what a sad misapplication of his theory must be the infallible result of the weak and limited nature of those, for whose reception it was so admirably fitted. Hume himself, indeed, furnished many examples (such we conceive them to be) of the danger which must attend the application of that theory, even in the hands of the ablest of men—enough to convince those capable of examining him and his disciples, that the doctrine may, indeed, be a true one, but that it would require intellects of a very different construction from our's, to make any satisfactory use of it. It might have been forgiven to David, had he overlooked his own incapacities only; but it is no easy matter to discover by what strange mist his clear and piercing eye has been blinded to those of a species, of whose nature he was, in other instances, so far from over-rating the excellencies. There can be little doubt, however, that what he wanted power to foresee and guard against, had he lived to taste the experience of a few succeeding years, he would have understood abundantly, and repented, too, in the retrospect. But, as Faustus says,

> " O what is intellect?—a strange, strange web—
> How bright the embroidery—but how dark the woof!"

Could we be permitted to correct our errors, we should no longer be men; nay, the poet, you know, has gone even farther than this, when he says,

Τῶν δε πεπραγμενων
Εν δικᾳ τε και παρα δικαν
Αποιητον ἐδ ἀν
Χρονος ὁ παντων πατηρ
Δυναιτο θεμεν ἐργων τελος.

As the Scotch nation could boast of no great philosophical names before the appearance of Hume, one cannot be surprised, that they should have felt a very lively pride in the display of his admirable powers. It is a thousand, and ten thousand pities, that the admiration we can scarcely blame them for according to him, might not have been gratified at less expense to themselves. I fear, indeed, there is but too much reason for suspecting, that the influence he has obtained both among them and others, will outlive many generations; although it is sufficiently amusing to observe in his writings, the quiet sort of confidence with which he himself looked forward to his literary immortality—not much doubting, it would appear, that the name of David Hume would continue to be reverenced by all persons of understanding many centuries af-

ter the Christian religion should have ceased to be talked of, excepting as one of the many hundred antediluvian and exploded species of superstition. Whatever may be his future fate, this much is quite certain, that the general principles of his philosophy still continue to exert a mighty influence over by far the greatest part of the literary men of his country; and that almost the only subject on which these his pious disciples dare to apply his principles in a different way from what he himself exemplified—is that of politics. Among them, as indeed I have hinted already, David's Toryism is always talked of, as one little foible which should not be too hardly thought of in the character of so great a man. The fund of jokes which he has given them the means of employing against himself, is sufficiently obvious; but such as they are, the jokes are uniformly put into requisition, whenever the subject of conversation gives the least colour of excuse for their introduction. They are delighted with the notion, that, in one thing at least, they are wiser than their master; and it would almost be a pity to put an end to so much pleasantry.

P. M.

LETTER IX.

TO THE SAME.

OMAN'S.

DEAR WILLIAMS,

I SAW yesterday, for the first time, an original portrait of David Hume; and you, who know my physiognomical and cranioscopical mania, will easily believe that this was a high source of gratification to me. Really you are too severe in your comments on my passion for "the human head divine." I wish to God some plain, sensible man, with the true Baconian turn for observation, would set about devoting himself in good earnest to the calm consideration of the skulls and faces which come in his way. In the present stage of the science, there is no occasion that any man should subject himself to the suspicion or reproach of quackery, by drawing rash conclusions, or laying claims before the time, to the seer-like qualities, which a mature system of

cranioscopy, well understood, would undoubtedly confer. All that can be done for a very long time, is, to note down the structure of men's heads in one page of a memorandum-book, and brief outlines of their characters, so far as these are known, in another. If fifty rational persons, in different regions of Europe, would keep such books for a few years, and then submit the whole to be inspected by a committee of cool inquirers, there can be no doubt data enough would be found accumulated, either firmly to establish, or fairly, and for ever, to overturn the idea of such a system. Whatever might be the result, I cannot think but that the time devoted to the inquiries would be pleasantly, nay, profitably spent. The person engaged in such a study, I do not at all mean perpetually engaged in it, could not fail to extend his acquaintance with his own species; for he would be furnished with a stronger stimulus than is common, to be quick and keen-sighted in his scrutiny of individuals. I, for my part, have already my skull-book, and I flatter myself its pages, even now, might furnish no uninteresting subject of study. I promise you, I intend to enrich it prodigiously before you have any opportunity of inspecting it.

The prints of David Hume are, most of them, I believe, taken from the very portrait I have seen; but, of course, the style and effect of the features, are much more thoroughly to be understood, when one has an opportunity of observing them expanded in their natural proportions. The face is far from being in any respect a classical one. The forehead is chiefly remarkable for its prominence from the ear, and not so much for its height. This gives him a lowering sort of look forward, expressive of great inquisitiveness into matters of fact, and the consequences to be deduced from them. His eyes are singularly prominent, which, according to the Gallic system, would indicate an extraordinary developement of the organ of language behind them. His nose is too low between the eyes, and not well or boldly formed in any other respect. The lips, although not handsome, have in their fleshy and massy outlines, abundant marks of habitual reflection and intellectual occupation. The whole has a fine expression of intellectual dignity, candour, and serenity. The want of elevation, however, which I have already noticed, injures very much the effect even of the structure of the lower part of the head. It

takes away all idea of the presence of the highest and most god-like elements of which our nature is capable. In the language of the German doctor, it denotes the non-developement of the organ of veneration. It is to be regretted that he wore powder, for this prevents us from having the advantage of seeing what was the natural style of his hair—or, indeed, of ascertaining the form of any part of his head beyond the forehead. If I mistake not, this physiognomy accords very well with the idea you have formed of David Hume's character. Although he was rather fond of plaguing his theological contemporaries, there was not much of the fanaticism of infidelity about him. His object, in most cases, was to see what the mere power of ratiocination would lead to, and wherever he met with an illogical sequence of propositions, he broke it down without mercy. When he was led into ill-toned and improper feelings, it was chiefly by the intoxication of intellectual power, for there seems to have been much humanity and graciousness in his disposition.

In the same room, I saw also a portrait, by the same hand, of David's illustrious friend, and illustrious enemy, Jean Jacques. No person who

sees their two heads in this juxta-position, can help wondering by what circumstances these two men should ever have been led to imagine themselves capable of entertaining true feelings of friendship for each other. As well might one conceive of an alliance between the calm, cud-chewing, mild-eyed cow of the meadow, and the wild, fierce, untamed and untameable leopard or panther of the jungle. Rousseau is represented in his usual fantastic Armenian garb, a loose flowing brown vest or caftan, and a high furred bonnet on his head. This last piece of dress mingles itself admirably with his wiry hair, twisted and convolved, as if it grew through a skin that had no rest—and both harmonize, as well as possible, with the thin, pale, melancholy visage, the narrow irascible lips, the black wandering impenetrable eye, and the thick jetty eyebrows drawn together with such a look of visionary suspiciousness. One sees little of the forehead itself, but the bonnet gives the effect of great elevation, and such, I doubt not, was the truth, could we look below. What an eloquent expression of self-tormenting imagination! It seems, as if all thoughts came to that mysterious receptacle, and few could find there any resting place,

Enthusiasm, with the strong wing, and the kingly eye of the eagle—the meaner ferocity of the kite—and passionate dreams, soft as the pinions of a dove—and broken touches of melody, more melting than the music of nightingales. Most strange, most unintelligible of men! what glimpses of more than earthly happiness must he have experienced, when, in the glory of his strength, he tossed from him for a time his besetting infirmities, and allowed his free spirit to soar and hover at its will! What more than mortal anguish, in the degradation and subjection of that which was capable of so aerial a flight—the imprisonment of the King of the Air! What wonder, that when mean thoughts festered in his nobler soul, he should have deemed all men traitors to his liberty, and poured his burning curses on them through the self-raised bars of his visionary dungeon! Alas! how easy to condemn, how difficult to sympathise in, the abberrations of such a spirit!

The gentle, inflexible, intellectual David—the most consistent of men—how should he have been the friend, the companion, of this phrenzied enthusiast? How could these men have understood each other?—their very eyes speak languages which have scarce two words in common.

In infidelity—the only point of their agreement, Hume was far more different from Rousseau, than half the Christians in the world are from half the infidels. They fought against different parts of the system, and they fought with different weapons. There was more danger by far to be dreaded from the Scot than the Swiss. His onset, indeed, was not attended with so much of the spectacular and imposing circumstance of combat—his troops were of a more still and quiet disposition, but they made their attacks with more cunning skill, and the effects of their impious triumphs have been far more durable and deadly. The high and lofty parts of man's nature, which Rousseau audaciously enlisted against the Bible, struggled, for a season, with all the clamours of determinate warfare; but they are the natural allies of that which they assaulted, and throughout the world they have long since returned devoutly to their old allegiance.

In Scotland, for I am still here, the nature of the conflict, has, I fear, corrupted even those that fought on the right side. Religion is too exclusively defended by arms of the same kind with those which attacked her. But I have no room at present to enter upon this.

P. M.

LETTER X.

TO THE REV. D. WILLIAMS.

Dear David,

I told you that Mr —— had sent me a letter of introduction to Mr Mackenzie, *the Man of Feeling*, and I need not tell you, that such an introduction to such a man, was as agreeable a circumstance as any that could have fallen in my way. I made all haste to deliver my credentials, but was told, when I called at his house, that the old gentleman had gone out a-riding. I really had no expectation of hearing his absence accounted for in that way, for I had always been accustomed to think of him as of one who had entirely outlived his contemporaries, and who must, therefore, be long past the years of active exertion. My surprise, however, was an agreeable one, and I prepared myself to find the veteran, when I should have the fortune to see him, a yet more interesting person than I had taught myself to look for.

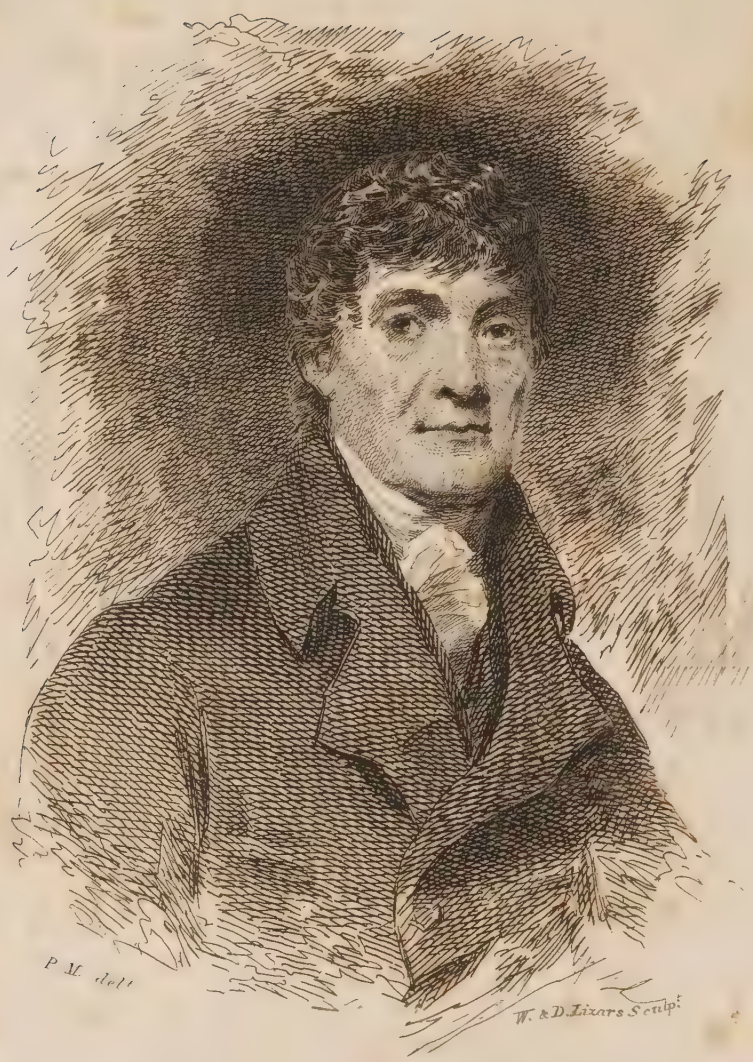
Yesterday morning I received a note from him, in which he apologized for not having immediately returned my call. He was extremely busy, he said, all the morning, but hoped I would come and dine with him in an unceremonious manner, the first day I found myself disengaged. I had half promised to dine at a tavern with one or two young gentlemen, friends of Wastle; but my curiosity was such, that I forthwith excused myself in that quarter, and accepted Mr Mackenzie's invitation for the same day on which it reached me. I assure you, that I should not have grudged my journey to Scotland, although I had laid up nothing to bring back with me, excepting the recollection of this one day.

As I walked in the direction of his house, with the certainty that a few minutes would bring me into his company, I was conscious of an almost superstitious feeling—a mysterious kind of expectation—something like what I can conceive to have been felt by the Armenian, when the deep green curtain hung before him, the uplifting of which, he was assured, would open to him a view into departed years, and place before his eyes the actual bodily presence of his long buried ancestor. I had read his works

when yet in the years of my infancy. The beautiful visions of his pathetic imagination had stamped a soft and delicious, but deep and indelible impression on my mind, long before I had heard the very name of criticism; perhaps before any of the literature of the present age existed—certainly long, very long, before I ever dreamt of its existence. The very names of the heroes and heroines of his delightful stories, sounded in my ears like the echoes of some old romantic melody, too simple, and too beautiful, to have been framed in these degenerate over-scientific days. Harley—La Roche—Montalban—Julia de Roubigné—what graceful mellow music is in the well-remembered cadences—the "παλαιων ὀνοματ' ονειρων!" And I was in truth to see "in the flesh" the hoary magician, whose wand had called those ethereal creations into everlasting being. A year before, I should have entertained almost as much hope of sitting at the same table with Goldsmith, or Sterne, or Addison, or any of those mild spirits so far removed from our nature "οἱ νυν βροτοι εσμεν." For the first time in my life, I could not help being ashamed of my youth, and feeling, as if it were presumption in me to approach, in the

garb of modern days, the last living relics of that venerable school.

The appearance of the fine old man had no tendency to dissipate the feelings I have just attempted to describe. I found him in his library, surrounded with a very large collection of books —few of them apparently new ones—seated in a high-backed easy chair—the wood-work carved very richly in the ancient French taste, and covered with black hair-cloth. On his head he wore a low cap of black velvet, like those which we see in almost all the pictures of Pope. But there needed none of these accessories to carry back the imagination. It is impossible that I should paint to you the full image of that face. The only one I ever saw which bore any resemblance to its character, was that of Warren Hastings—you well remember the effect *it* produced, when he appeared among all that magnificent assemblage, to take his degree at the installation of Lord Grenville. In the countenance of Mackenzie, there is the same clear transparency of skin, the same freshness of complexion, in the midst of all the extenuation of old age. The wrinkles, too, are set close to each other, line upon line; not deep and bold, and rugged, like those of most old men, but



M.R MACKENZIE.

equal and undivided over the whole surface, as if no touch but that of time had been there, and as if even He had traced the vestiges of his dominion with a sure indeed, but with a delicate and reverential finger. The lineaments have all the appearance of having been beautifully shaped, but the want of his teeth has thrown them out of their natural relation to each other. The eyes alone have bid defiance to the approach of the adversary. Beneath bleached and hoary brows, and surrounded with innumerable wrinkles, they are still as tenderly, as brightly blue, as full of all the various eloquence and fire of passion, as they could have been in the most vivacious of his days, when they were lighted up with that purest and loftiest of all earthly flames, the first secret triumph of conscious and conceiving genius.

By and by, Mr Mackenzie withdrew into his closet, and having there thrown off his slippers, and exchanged his cap for a brown wig, he conducted me to the drawing-room. His family were already assembled to receive us—his wife, just as I should have wished to picture her, a graceful old lady, with much of the remains of beauty, clothed in an open gown of black silk, with deep flounces, and having a high cap, with

the lace meeting below the chin—his eldest son, a man rather above my own standing, who is said to inherit much of the genius of his father, (although he has chosen to devote it to very different purposes—being very eminent among the advocates of the present time)—and some younger children. The only visitor, besides myself, was an old friend, and, indeed, contemporary of Mackenzie, a Mr Roland*, who was, in his time, at the head of the profession of the law in Scotland; but who has now lived for many years in retirement. I have never seen a finer specimen, both in appearance and manners, of the true gentleman of the last age. In his youth, he must have been a perfect model of manly beauty; and, indeed, no painter could select a more exquisite subject for his art even now. His hair combed back from his forehead and highly powdered, his long queue, his lace-ruffles, his suit of snuff-coloured cloth, cut in the old liberal way, with long flaps to his waistcoat, his high-heeled shoes and rich steel-buckles—every thing was perfectly in unison with the fashion of his age. The stately and measured decorum of his polite-

* This excellent man is dead since the publication of the Second Edition of these Letters.

ness was such, as could not well be displayed by any man dressed in our free-and-easy style; but in him it did not produce the least effect of stiffness or coldness. It was a delightful thing to see these two old men, who had rendered themselves eminent in two so different walks of exertion, meeting together in the quiet evening of their days, to enjoy in the company of each other every luxury which intellectual communication can afford, heightened by the yet richer luxury of talking over the feelings of times, to which they almost alone are not strangers.

They are both perfectly men of the world, so that there was not the least tinge of professional pedantry in their conversation. As for Mr Mackenzie, indeed, literature was never anything more than an amusement to him, however great the figure he has made in it, and the species of literature in which he excelled was, in its very essence, connected with any ideas rather than those of secluded and artist-like abstraction. There was nothing to be seen which could have enabled a stranger to tell which was the great lawyer, and which the great novellist. I confess, indeed, I was a little astonished to find, from Mr Mackenzie's mode of conversation, how very little his habits had ever been those of a mere

literary man. He talked for at least half an hour, and, I promise you, very knowingly, about flies for angling; and told me, with great good humour, that he still mounts his poney in autumn, and takes the field against the grouse with a long fowling-piece slung from his back, and a pointer-bitch, to the full as venerable among her species as her affectionate master is among his. The lively vivacity with which he talked over various little minute circumstances of his last campaign in the moors, and the almost boyish keenness with which he seemed to be looking forward to the time of trouting—all this might have been looked upon as rather frivolous, and out of place, in another of his years; but, for my part, I could not help being filled both with delight and admiration, by so uncommon a display of elasticity in the springs of his temperament.

He gave us an excellent bottle of Muscat-de-Rives-altes during dinner, and I must say I am inclined very much to approve of that old-fashioned delicacy. We had no lack of Château-la-Rose afterwards, and neither of the old gentlemen seemed to have the slightest objection to its inspiration. A truly charming air of sober hilarity was diffused over their features, and they

began to give little sketches of the old times, in which perhaps their hilarity might not always be so sober, in a way that carried me back delightfully to the very heart of "High-jinks." According to the picture they gave, the style of social intercourse in this city, in their younger days, seems, indeed, to have been wonderfully easy and captivating. At that time, you must know, not one stone of the New Town, in which they, and all the fashionable inhabitants of Edinburgh now reside, had been erected. The whole of the genteel population lived crowded together in those tall citadels of the Old Town, from one of which my friend Wastle still refuses to be dislodged. Their houses were small, but abundantly neat and comfortable, and the labour which it cost to ascend to one of them was sure to be repaid at all hours by a hearty welcome from its possessor. The style of visiting, altogether, was as different as possible from the ceremonious sort of fashion now in vogue. They did not deal in six weeks' invitations and formal dinners; but they formed, at a few hours' notice, little snug supper-parties, which, without costing any comparative expense, afforded opportunities a thousand-fold for all manner of friendly communica-

tion between the sexes. As for the gentlemen, they never thought of committing any excess, except in taverns, and at night; and Mr Roland mentioned, that, almost within his own recollection, it had been made matter of very serious aggravation in the offence of a gentleman of rank, tried before the Court of Justiciary, that he had allowed his company to get drunk in his house before it was dark, even in the month of July. At that time, the only liquor was claret, and this they sent for just as they wanted it—huge pewter jugs, or, as they called them, *stoups* of claret, being just as commonly to be seen travelling the streets of Edinburgh in all directions *then*, as the mugs of Mieux and Barclay are in those of London *now*. Of course, I made allowance for the privilege of age; but I have no doubt there was abundance of good wit, and, what is better, good-humour among them, no less than of good claret. If I were to take the evening I spent in listening to its history, as a fair specimen of the "Auld Time," (and after all, why should I not?) I should almost be inclined to reverse the words of the Laureate, and to say,

—— " of all places, and all times of earth,
Did fate grant choice of time and place to men,
Wise choice might be their SCOTLAND, and their THEN."

I assure you, however, that I returned to my hotel in no disposition to quarrel either with time or place, or " any other creature"—a bottle of excellent wine under my belt, and my mind richly dieted with one of the true *Noctes Cœnæque.*

Ever your's,
P. M.

P. S. I had forgotten to mention, that both Mackenzie and his friend are staunch Tories; but I don't deny, that this might have some effect in increasing my love for them.

LETTER XI.

TO THE SAME.

I HEARD it mentioned at Mr Mackenzie's, that a triennial dinner, in honour of Robert Burns, was about to take place; and thinking it would be a good opportunity for me to see a larger number of the Scots literati than I had yet met with collected together, I resolved, if possible, to make one of the party. I found, on inquiring, that in consequence of the vast multitude of persons who wished to be present, the original plan of the dinner had been necessarily departed from, and the company were to assemble, not in a tavern, for no tavern in Edinburgh could accommodate them, but in the Assembly-Rooms in George-Street. Even so, I was told, there was likely to be a deficiency rather than a superfluity of room; and, indeed, when I went to buy my ticket, I found no more remained to be sold. But I procured one afterwards through Mr Mackenzie; and Wastle arriving from the country

the same day, I went to the place in company with him. He is hand in glove with half of the stewards, and had no difficulty in getting himself smuggled in. I send you a copy of the Edinburgh Weekly Journal, which contains the best newspaper account of the affair I have met with, but shall proceed to favour you with a few of my own observations in addition.

Those who are accustomed to talk and think of the Scotch as a cold phlegmatic people, would have been convinced of their mistake by a single glance at the scene which met my eyes when I entered. I have never witnessed a more triumphant display of national enthusiasm, and had never expected to witness any display within many thousand degrees of it, under any thing less than the instantaneous impulse of some glorious victory. The room is a very large one, and I had already seen it lighted up in all the splendour of a ball; but neither its size nor its splendour had then made any thing more than a very common-place impression on my mind. But now—what a sight was here! A hall of most majestic proportions—its walls, and hangings, and canopies of crimson, giving a magical richness of effect to the innumerable chandeliers

with which its high roof appeared to be starred and glowing—the air overhead alive with the breath of lutes and trumpets—below, the whole mighty area paved with human faces, (for the crowd was such that nothing of the tables could at first be seen,)—the highest, and the wisest, and the best of a nation assembled together—and all for what?—to do honour to the memory of one low-born peasant. What a lofty tribute to the true nobility of Nature!—What a glorious vindication of the born majesty of Genius!

With difficulty we procured seats at the lower extremity of the Hall, at the table where Captain Adam of the Navy (son to the Judge) presided as croupier—a fine manly-looking fellow, with a world of cordial jollity in his face. Wastle chose to sit at this table, as he afterwards told me, because, in the course of a long experience, he had found the fare of a public dinner uniformly much better in the immediate neighbourhood of the croupier or president; and indeed, whatever might be the case elsewhere, the fare where we sat was most excellent. We had turbot in perfection—a haunch of prime venison—the red-deer I believe—and every thing, in short, which could have been selected to make a *private* dinner delicious.

The port and sherry allowed by the traiteur were by no means to be sneezed at; but my friend had determined to make himself as happy as possible, and his servant produced a bottle of hock, and another of the sparkler during dinner. Afterwards, we exchanged our port for very tolerable claret, and we had filberts and olives at will; which being the case, *entre nous*, no man could complain of his dessert.

The chair was occupied by Mr John Murray, an advocate of considerable note; a pleasant gentlemanlike person, so far as I could judge, (for he was quite at the other end of the room from us); and close around him were gathered a great number of the leading members of the same profession. Among the rest Jeffrey. An universal feeling of regret appeared to fill the company, on account of the absence of Mr Scott, who was expected to have taken his place at the right hand of the president, and would have come to town for the purpose, had he not been prevented by a severe attack of illness. In different parts of the room, a variety of distinguished individuals, of whom I had often heard, were successively pointed out to me by Wastle; but it was

some time before I could collect my senses, sufficiently to take any very accurate inspection of their physiognomies. Wherever I looked, I saw faces ennobled by all the eloquence of a pure and lofty enthusiasm. It was evident, that all had the right feeling; and at such a moment it appeared to me a comparatively small matter which of them had the celebrity even of genius.

After dinner, the president rose and proposed *The Memory of the Poet.* The speech with which he prefaced the toast was delivered with all the ease of a practised speaker, and was by no means devoid of traces of proper feeling. But, I confess, on the whole, its effect was to me rather a disappointing one. The enthusiasm felt by the company was such, that nothing could have been pitched in a key too high for them; and the impression of Mr Murray's address had certainly, in their state of feeling at the moment, more of a chilling than an elevating effect. I thought him peculiarly unhappy in the choice of a few poetical quotations with which he diversified his speech—that from Swift's Rhapsody, in particular, was extremely unfortunate. What good effect could be produced on such an occasion as this, by repeating such lines as those about

" Not beggar's brat on bulk begot,
Not bastard of a pedlar Scot,
Not boy brought up to cleaning shoes,
The spawn of Bridewell or the stews,
Not infants dropped, the spurious pledges
Of gypsies littering under hedges
Are so disqualified by fate
To rise in church, or law, or state,
As he whom Phœbus, in his ire,
Has blasted with poetic fire," &c.

Nor were the fine verses of Milton much more appropriate to the occasion, although their own grandeur would probably have prevented them from being at all disagreeable in the hearing, had Mr Murray's recollection been such as to enable him to recite them with facility. Whatever may be the case with the most of those, whose lips " Phœbus tips with fire," poor Burns was assuredly not one who neglected, for the sake of the Muses,

" To sport with Amaryllis in the shade,
Or with the tangles of Neæra's hair."

But it would be quite silly to trouble you with such *minutiæ* as these;—the true defect lay in selecting, to preside in such an assembly upon such an occasion, any other than a man of great reputation and rank in literature. Had such a

person been selected, and had he, as it might have happened, committed the very same faults which Mr Murray did commit, the impression of his general character would still have been sufficient to prevent the company from regarding, otherwise than with a favourable eye, even the defects of one in whom they would have been eager and proud to recognise the intellectual kinsman of their great poet. But, in the first place, it is not easy to understand why a man should be chosen to direct and guide the enthusiasm of a meeting in honour of Roburt Burns, merely because he himself enjoys a tolerable degree of reputation as a Scottish barrister; and, in the second place, every point in which such a person so chosen fails in the discharge of his duties, has the effect of making men recur to this original difficulty, with an increasing and a most unpleasant pertinacity. There was, perhaps, an injudicious degree of courage in Mr Murray's attempt; but "*eventus docuit.*"

It is a much easier thing, however, to say who should *not*, than who should have presided on this occasion. It seems that, among others, Mr Jeffrey had been talked of; but he had the good sense to reject the proposal without hesitation.

And with what face, indeed, could he, the author of the longest, and most deliberate, and most elaborate attack that ever assailed the character of Burns—an attack of which, with all my tolerance for Mr Jeffrey's failings, I cannot help thinking the whole spirit and tone are radically and essentially abominable—with what face could he have presumed to occupy the first place in an assembly of men, whose sole bond of union could be nothing else than that feeling of deep, tender, and reverential admiration for poor Burns's memory, his own want of which had been so decidedly, or rather so ostentatiously held forth? Many people can see some excuse—and I myself can imagine some explanation of the irreverent way, in which Mr Jeffrey has accustomed himself to treat his own great poetical contemporaries. But I know not, neither can I imagine, upon what principle a man of his fine understanding, and fine feeling too, should have esteemed himself justifiable in concentrating the whole pitiless vigour of his satire upon the memory of one, whose failings, whatever they might be, were entitled to so much compassion as those of Robert Burns—in exhausting his quiver of poisoned shafts in piercing and lacera-

ting the resting-place of one, whose living name must always be among the dearest and most sacred possessions of his countrymen. I cannot help thinking, that Jeffrey displayed in that attack a very lamentable defect, not merely of nationality of feeling, but of humanity of feeling. If the pride of being the countryman of Burns was not enough to make Jeffrey a lenient observer of his errors, there were abundance of other considerations of a yet higher kind, which should not have come vainly to the aid of that honourable pride. Alas! how easy a thing is it for us, who have been educated in the atmosphere of ease—who have "been clothed in fine linen, and fared sumptuously every day"—how easy a thing is it for such as we are, to despise and deride the power of temptations, that might be enough, and more than enough, to unhinge all the resolutions, and darken all the destinies of one, who had been accustomed, in good earnest, *to drink the water of bitterness and eat his bread in the sweat of his brow!* It is an easy thing for those, who have comfortable homes, and congenial occupations, to rail against the dissipated habits of a poor wandering poet, compelled to waste his best days in degrading drud-

geries, and night after night to find himself surrounded in his own narrow dwelling by all the depressing and contracting squalors of penury.

The rule of judging as we would be judged, although an excellent one, surely, in the main, must be taken, I think, with a great *sequela* of exceptions. It is the besetting temptation of many natures, and honest natures too, to

> "Compound for sins they are inclined to,
> By damning those they have no mind to."

And perhaps few sins are more "damned" upon this principle than those of the bottle. You might as well attempt to make a deaf man comprehend the excellencies of Mozart, as to convince some people that it is a venial thing to be fond of an extra glass of claret. Many even of those who take great pleasure in society, can never be brought to understand why people should get tipsy when they meet together round a table. The delight which they experience in company, is purely rational—derived from nothing but the animated and invigorated collision of contending and sporting intellects. They have wit and wisdom for their share, and they have little reason to complain; but what do they know

about the full, hearty, glorious swing of jollity? How can they ever sympathise with the misty felicity of a man singing

"It is the moon—I ken her horn!"

I think no man should be allowed to say any thing about Burns, who has not joined in this chorus, although timber-tuned, and sat till daylight, although married.

The first healths (after some of mere formality,) were those of the mother of Burns—for she, it seems, is still alive, in extreme old age; his widow, the "Jean" of his poetry—and his sons. A gentleman who proposed one of these toasts, mentioned a little anecdote, which gave infinite delight to all present, and which will do so to you. After the last of these triennal meetings, a pension of L.50 *per annum* was settled on Mrs Burns, by a Scottish gentleman of large fortune, Mr Maule of Panmure. One of the sons of the poet, however, has since that time gone out to India in a medical capacity; and being fortunate enough to obtain a situation of some little emolument, the first use he made of his success was to provide for his mother, in such a way as enabled her to decline any farther

continuance of Mr Maule's bounty—conduct, as was well said, " worthy of the wife and son of the high-souled Burns"—one who, in spite of all his faults, and all his difficulties, contrived in the true spirit of proud independence, *to owe no man any thing* when he died. By the way, the person who mentioned this was the same George Thomson, whose name is so intimately associated with that of Burns, in the great collection of Scots Music.

The health of Mr Scott was then proposed, in terms of such warmth as might fit the occasion by the Chairman. That of Mr Mackenzie was given by Mr Cockburn, a celebrated advocate, and prefaced with some very elegant sentences respecting the early and effectual patronage extended by him to Burns in the Mirror. Mr Jeffrey then rose and proposed the health of Thomas Campbell, with a neat allusion to his late exquisite sketch of the character of Burns in the " Specimens." I assure you, nothing could be more appropriate, or more delightful, than the way in which all these toasts were received by the company. But you will see well enough by the paper I have sent you, what toasts were given. I am sorry to say, that those which were *not* given, occu-

pied not a little of my attention. It was obvious from the way in which things went on, that Mr Murray, Mr Jeffrey, Mr Cockburn, and one or two of their friends among the stewards, had previously arranged among themselves what toasts should be proposed, and in what order; nor could the business of such a meeting be well conducted without some such preparation. I well knew before I went, that, as it happened, those gentlemen who took the chief direction in this affair were all keen Whigs. But I never considered this as a circumstance of the slightest importance, nor expected, most assuredly, that it would at all shew itself in the conduct of the assembly. I regarded politics and parties as things that had not the least connection with the purposes of the meeting, and expected, indeed, that they would have been most studiously kept out of view, for the very purpose of rendering the meeting as universally and genially delightful as possible. I was, however, sadly disappointed. It is needless to multiply examples. It is sufficient to mention, that not one of these Edinburgh Reviewers had the common candour or manliness, in a meeting, the object of which was so purely to do honour to poetical genius, to pro-

pose the health either of Wordsworth, or of Southey, or of Coleridge. I could not have believed that the influence of paltry prejudices could ever be allowed to controul in such a way the conduct of men so well entitled to be above their sphere. Even by the confession of the Edinburgh Review itself, these men are three of the greatest poetical geniuses our island ever has produced. Their choice of subjects, their style of versification, and various other particulars, are ridiculed; but it is no where denied that even their errors are entitled to derive some little shelter from the originality, power, and beauty, of the productions in which they make their appearance. I am indeed very much at a loss to comprehend, how any man of intelligence could satisfy his conscience, that he did right in proposing, on such an occasion as this, the healths of Crabbe, Rogers, nay even of Montgomery, (for such was the case,) and omitting to do the same honour to the great names I have mentioned. Surely here was a sad descent from that pure elevation on which the true critic, and the true philosopher, must ever stand. I had no conception previously of the real extent to which, in this country of political strife, the absurdities of

party spleen are carried, even by men of eminence and virtue. I had no suspicion, that such a man as Mr Jeffrey, or even as Mr Murray, would have dared to shew, almost to confess himself, incapable of overlooking the petty discrepancies of political opinion, in forming his estimate of a great English poet's character. It is not thus that a man can hope to anticipate the judgment of posterity, or to exert a permanent sway over that of his contemporaries. In regard to Mr Jeffrey, above all, I confess I was grieved to detect so much littleness, where I had been willing to look for very different things. I was grieved, indeed, to discover that he also, even out of his Review, is in a great measure one that

> ———" narrows his mind,
> And to party gives up what was meant for mankind."

That Mr Jeffrey had found reason to change some of the opinions he had once expressed concerning Robert Burns, was, in part at least, admitted by himself, in one of the speeches he delivered on this very occasion. Nay, had it not been so, I am inclined to think it might have been better for him to have kept altogether

away from the assembly. Having laid aside the worst of his prejudices against poor Burns, why should he not have been proud and joyful in finding and employing such an opportunity for doing justice to a great poet, who,—himself the purest of men, and leading and having ever led the holiest and most dignified of lives,—had not disdained to come forward at an earlier and a less triumphant period, as the defender and guardian of the reputation of his frailer brother? What had parties and systems, and schools, and nicknames, to do with such a matter as this? Are there no healing moments in which men can afford to be free from the fetters of their petty self-love? Is the hour of genial and cordial tenderness, when man meets man to celebrate the memory of one who has conferred honour on their common nature—is even that sacred hour to be polluted and profaned by any poisonous sprinklings of the week-day paltriness of life?—My displeasure, in regard to this affair, has very little to do with my displeasure in regard to the general treatment of Mr Wordsworth in the Edinburgh Review. That the poems of this man should be little read and little admired by the majority of those who claim for them-

selves the character of taste and intelligence—that they should furnish little, except subjects of mirth and scorn, to those who, by their own writings, would direct the judgment of others—these are things which affect some of his admirers with astonishment—they affect me with no sentiments but those of humility and grief. The delight which is conferred by vivid descriptions of stranger events and stronger impulses than we ourselves experience, is adapted for all men, and is an universal delight. That part of our nature, to which they address themselves, not only exists in every man originally, but has its existence fostered and cherished by the incidents of every life. To find a man who has no relish for the poetry of Love or of War, is almost as impossible, as to find one that does not enjoy the brightness of the sun, or the softness of moonlight. The poetry of ambition, hatred, revenge, pleases masculine minds in the same manner as the flashing of lightnings and the roaring of cataracts. But there are other things in man and in nature, besides tumultuous passions and tempestuous scenes ;—and he that is a very great poet, may be by no means a very popular one.

The critics who ridicule Mr Wordsworth, for

choosing the themes of his poetry among a set of objects new and uninteresting to their minds, would have seen, had they been sufficiently acute, or would have confessed, had they been sufficiently candid, that, had he so willed it, he might have been among the best and most powerful masters in other branches of his art, more adapted for the generality of mankind and for themselves. The martial music in the hall of Clifford was neglected by the Shepherd Lord, for the same reasons which have rendered the poet that celebrates him such a poet as he is.

> "Love had he seen in huts where poor men lie,
> His daily teachers had been woods and rills;
> The silence that is in the starry sky,
> The sleep that is among the lonely hills."

Before a man can understand and relish his poems, his mind must, in some measure, pass through the same sober discipline—a discipline that calms, but does not weaken the spirit—that blends together the understanding and the affections, and improves both by the mixture. The busy life of cities, the ordinary collisions of sarcasm and indifference, steel the mind against the emotions that are bred and nourished among

those quiet vallies, so dear to the Shepherd Lord and his poet. What we cannot understand, it is a very common, and indeed a very natural thing, for us to undervalue; and it may be suspected, that some of the merriest witticisms which have been uttered against Mr Wordsworth, have had their origin in the pettishness and dissatisfaction of minds, unaccustomed and unwilling to make, either to others or to themselves, any confessions of incapacity.

But I am wandering sadly from him, who, as Wordsworth has beautifully expressed it,

> ———" walked in glory and in joy,
> Following his plough along the mountain's side."

—However, I shall come back to him in my next.

P. M.

LETTER XII.

TO THE SAME.

DEAR DAVID,

IN order to catch the post, a few days ago, I sent off my letter before my subject was half concluded; which, doubtless, you will attribute chiefly, or entirely, to my old passion for parentheses and episodes. To return to my *epos*—the Burns's dinner.

One of the best speeches, perhaps the very best, delivered during the whole of the evening, was that of Mr John Wilson, in proposing the health of the Ettrick Shepherd. I had heard a great deal of Wilson from Wastle, but he had been out of Edinburgh ever since my arrival, and indeed had walked only fifty miles that very morning, in order to be present on this occasion. He showed no symptoms, however, of being fatigued with his journey, and his style of elo-

quence, above all, whatever faults it might have, displayed certainly no deficiency of freshness and vigour. As I know you admire some of his verses very much, you will be pleased with a sketch of his appearance. He is, I imagine, (but I guess principally from the date of his Oxford prize poem) some ten years your junior and mine—a very robust athletic man, broad across the back—firm set upon his limbs—and having altogether very much of that sort of air which is inseparable from the consciousness of great bodily energies. I suppose, in leaping, wrestling, or boxing, he might easily beat any of the poets, his contemporaries—and I rather suspect, that in speaking, he would have as easy a triumph over the whole of them, except Coleridge. In complexion, he is the best specimen I have ever seen of the genuine or ideal *Goth*. His hair is of the true Sicambrian yellow; his eyes are of the lightest, and at the same time of the clearest blue; and the blood glows in his cheek with as firm a fervour as it did, according to the description of Jornandes, in those of the "Bello gaudentes, prælio ridentes Teutones" of Attila. I had never suspected, before I saw him, that such extreme fairness and freshness of complexion could be compatible with so much

variety and tenderness, but, above all, with so much depth of expression. His forehead is finely, but strangely shaped; the regions of pure fancy and of pure wit, being both developed in a very striking manner—which is but seldom the case in any one individual—and the organ of observation having projected the *sinus frontalis* to a degree that is altogether uncommon. I have never seen a physiognomy which could pass with so much rapidity from the serious to the most ludicrous of effects. It is more eloquent, both in its gravity and in its levity, than almost any countenance I am acquainted with is in any one cast of expression; and yet I am not without my suspicions, that the versatility of its language may, in the end, take away from its power.

In a convivial meeting—more particularly after the first two hours are over—the beauty to which men are most alive in any piece of eloquence is that which depends on its being impregnated and instinct with feeling. Of this beauty, no eloquence can be more full than that of Mr John Wilson. His declamation is often loose and irregular to an extent that is not quite worthy of a man of his fine education and masculine powers; but all is redeemed, and more than redeemed, by his rich abundance of quick, gene-

rous, and expansive feeling. The flashing brightness, and now and then the still more expressive dimness of his eye—and the tremulous music of a voice that is equally at home in the highest and the lowest of notes—and the attitude bent forward with an earnestness to which the graces could make no valuable addition—all together compose an index which they that run may read—a rod of communication to whose electricity no heart is barred. Inaccuracies of language are small matters when the ear is fed with the wild and mysterious cadences of the most natural of all melodies, and the mind filled to overflowing with the bright suggestions of an imagination, whose only fault lies in the uncontrollable profusion with which it scatters forth its fruits. With such gifts as these, and with the noblest of themes to excite and adorn them, I have no doubt, that Mr Wilson, had he been in the church, would have left all the impassioned preachers I have ever heard many thousand leagues behind him. Nor do I at all question, that even in some departments of his own profession of the law, had he in good earnest devoted his energies to its service, his success might have been equally brilliant. But his ambition had probably taken too decidedly another turn ;

nor, perhaps, would it be quite fair, either to him or to ourselves, to wish that the thing had been otherwise.

As Mr Wilson has not only a great admiration, but a great private friendship for Mr Hogg, his eloquence displayed, it is probable, upon the present occasion, a large share of every feeling that might most happily inspire it. His theme was indeed the very best that the occasion could have thrown in his way; for what homage could be so appropriate, or so grateful to the Manes of Burns, as that which sought to attain its object by welcoming and honouring the only worthy successor of his genius? I wish I could recall for your delight any portion of those glowing words in which this enthusiastic speaker strove to embody his own ideas—and indeed those of his audience—concerning the high and holy connection which exists between the dead and the living peasant—both "sprung from the very bosom of the people," both identifying themselves in all things with the spirit of their station, and endeavouring to ennoble themselves only by elevating it. It was thus, indeed, that a national assembly might most effectually do honour to a national poet. This was the true spirit for a commemoration of Robert Burns.

The effect which Mr Wilson's speech produced on Hogg himself, was, to my mind, by far the most delightful thing that happened during the whole of the night. The Shepherd was one of the stewards, and in every point of view he must have expected some particular notice to be taken of his name; but either he had not been prepared for being spoken of at so early an hour, or was entirely thrown off his balance by the extraordinary flood of eloquence which Mr Wilson poured out, to do honour to his genius; for nothing could be more visibly unaffected, than the air of utter blank amazement with which he rose to return his thanks. He rose, by the way, long before the time came. He had listened to Mr Wilson for some minutes, without comprehending the drift of his discourse: but when once he fairly discovered that he himself was the theme, he started to his feet, and with a face flushed all over deeper than scarlet, and eyes brimful of tears, devoured the words of the speaker.

> "Like hungry Jew in wilderness,
> Rejoicing o'er his manna."

His voice, when he essayed to address the company, seemed at first entirely to fail him; but

he found means to make us hear a very few words, which told better than any speech could have done. "*I've aye been vera proud, gentlemen,*" (said he,) "*to be a Scots poet—and I was never sae proud o't as I am just noo.*" I believe there was no one there who did not sympathize heartily with this most honest pride. For my part, I began to be quite in love with the Ettrick Shepherd.

In process of time, the less jovial members of the company began to effect their retreat, and the Laird and I, espying some vacant places at the table where Mr Wilson and the Ettrick Shepherd were seated, were induced to shift our situation, for the sake of being nearer these celebrated characters. I was placed within a few feet of Hogg, and introduced to Wilson across the table, and soon found, from the way in which the bottle circulated in this quarter, that both of them inherited in perfection the old feud of Burns against the "*aquæ potores.*" As to the bottle, indeed, I should exclude Hogg; for he, long before I came into his neighbourhood, had finished the bottle of port allowed by our traiteur, and was deep in a huge jug of whisky toddy—in the manufacture of which he is supposed to excel almost as much as Burns did—

and in its consumption too, although happily in rather a more moderate degree.

After this time, I suspect the prescribed order of toasts began to be sadly neglected, for long speeches were uttered from remote corners, nobody knew by whom or about what; song after song was volunteered; and all the cold restraints of sobriety being gradually thawed by the sun of festive cheer,

"Wit walked the rounds, and music filled the air."

The inimitable "Jolly Beggars" of the poet, which has lately been set to music, was got up in high style, the songs being exquisitely sung by Messrs Swift, Templeton, and Lees, and the recitative read with much effect by Mr B——. But even this entertainment, with all its inherent variety, was too regular for the taste of the assembly. The chairman himself broke in upon it the first, by proposing a very appropriate toast, which I shall attempt to naturalize in Cardiganshire; this again called up a very old gentleman, who conceived that some compliment had been intended for a club of which he is president; in short, compliments and toasts became so interlaced and interlarded, that nobody could think of taking up the thread of "The Jolly Beggars"

again. By the way, this inimitable Cantata is not to be found in Currie's edition, and I suspect you are a stranger even to its name; and yet, had Burns left nothing more than this behind him, I think he would still have left enough to justify all the honour in which his genius is held. There does not exist, in any one piece throughout the whole range of English poetry, such a collection of true, fresh, and characteristic lyrics. Here we have nothing, indeed, that is very high, but we have much that is very tender. What can be better in its way, than the fine song of the Highland Widow, "wha had in mony a well been douked?"

"A Highland lad my love was born,
The Lowland laws he held in scorn;
But he still was faithful to his clan,
My gallant braw John Highlandman.
With his philabeg and tartan plaid,
And good claymore down by his side,
The ladies' hearts he did trepan,
My gallant braw John Highlandman.

Sing, hey, my braw John Highlandman,
Sing, ho, my braw John Highlandman,
There's not a lad in a' the lan'
Was match for my John Highlandman."

And that fine Penseroso close,

"But oh! they catch'd him at the last,
And bound him in a dungeon fast;

My curse upon them every one,
They've hang'd my braw John Highlandman.
And now, a widow, I must mourn
Departed joys that ne'er return;
No comfort—but a hearty can,
When I think on John Highlandman."

The Little Fiddler, who (in vain, alas!) offers his services to console her, is conceived in the most happy taste.

" A pigmy scraper wi' his fiddle,
Wha used at trysts and fairs to driddle,
Her strapping limb and gausy middle,
(He reached nae higher,)
Had holed his heartie like a riddle,
And blawn't on fire.

Wi' hand on haunch, and upward ee,
He crooned his gamut, one, two, three,
Then in an Arioso key,
The wee Apollo
Set off with allegretto glee,
His giga solo."

But the finest part of the whole, is the old Scottish Soldier's ditty. Indeed, I think there is no question, that half of the best ballads Campbell has written, are the legitimate progeny of some of these lines.

1

" I am a son of Mars, who have been in many wars,
And shew my cuts and scars wherever I come;

This here was for a wench, and that other in a trench,
When welcoming the French at the sound of the drum.
My prenticeship I passed where my leader breathed his last,
When the bloody die was cast on the heights of Abram;
I served out my trade when the gallant game was play'd,
And the Moro low was laid at the sound of the drum.

2

"I lastly was with Curtis among the floating batt'ries,
And there I left for witness an arm and a limb;
Yet let my country need me, with Elliot to head me,
I'd clatter on my stumps at the sound of the drum.
What though with hoary locks, I must stand the winter shocks,
Beneath the woods and rocks oftentimes for a home!
When the t'other bag I sell, and the t'other bottle tell,
I could meet a troop of hell at the sound of the drum."

What different ideas of low life one forms even from reading the works of men who paint it admirably. Had Crabbe, for instance, undertaken to represent the carousal of a troop of Beggars in a hedge alehouse, how unlike would his production have been to this Cantata? He would have painted their rags and their dirt with the accuracy of a person who is not used to see rags and dirt very often; he would have seized the light careless swing of their easy code of morality, with the penetration of one who has long been a Master-Anatomist of the manners and the hearts of men. But I doubt very much, whether any one could enter into the true spirit

of such a meeting, who had not been, at some period of his life, a partaker in *propriâ personâ*, and almost *par cum paribus*, in the rude merriment of its constituents. I have no doubt that Burns sat for his own picture in the Bard of the Cantata, and had often enough in some such scene as *Poosie Nansie's*—

> ———" Rising, rejoicing
> Between his twa Deborahs,
> Looked round him, and found them
> Impatient for his chorus."

It is by such familiarity alone that the secret and essence of that charm, which no groupe of human companions entirely wants, can be fixed and preserved even by the greatest of poets—Mr Crabbe would have described the Beggars like a firm though humane Justice of the Peace—poor Robert Burns did not think himself entitled to assume any such airs of superiority. The consequence is, that we would have understood and pitied the one groupe, but that we sympathize even with the joys of the other. We would have thrown a few shillings to Mr Crabbe's Mendicants, but we are more than half inclined to sit down and drink them ourselves along with the " orra duds" of those of Burns.

I myself—will you believe it?—was one of those who insisted upon disturbing the performance of this glorious Cantata with my own dissonant voice. In plain truth, I was so happy, that I could not keep silence, and such was the buoyancy of my enthusiasm, that nothing could please me but singing a Scottish song. I believe, after all, I got through it pretty well; at least, I did well enough to delight my neighbours. My song was that old favourite of your's—

> "My name it is Donald Macdonald,
> I live in the Hielands sae grand,"

One of the best songs, I must think, that our times has produced; and, indeed, it was for many years one of the most popular. I had no idea who wrote the words of my song, and had selected it merely for its own merit, and my own convenience; but I had no sooner finished, than Mr Hogg stretched his hand to me, across two or three that sat between us, and cried out with an air of infinite delight, "Od', sir—Doctor Morris"—(for he had heard my name,)—"od', sir,—I wrote that sang when I was a herd on Yarrow,—and little did I think ever to live to hear an English gentleman sing it." From this

moment there was no bound to the warmth of our affection for each other; in order to convince you of which, in so far as I myself was concerned, I fairly deserted my claret for the sake of joining in the jug party of the Shepherd. Nor, after all, was this quite so mighty a sacrifice as you may be inclined to imagine. I assure you, there are worse things in life than whisky-toddy; although I cannot go the same length with Mr Hogg, who declared over and over that there is nothing so good.

A man may now and then, adopt a change of liquor with advantage; but, upon the whole, I like better to see people "stick to their vocation." I think nothing can be a more pitiable sight than a French count on his travels, striving to look pleased over a bumper of strong Port; and an Oxford doctor of divinity looks almost as much like a fish out of water, when he is constrained to put up with the best Claret in the world. In like manner, it would have tended very much to disturb my notions of propriety, had I found Hogg drinking Hock. It would have been a sin against *keeping* with such a face as he has. Although for some time past he has spent a considerable portion of every year in excellent, even in refined so-

ciety, the external appearance of the man can have undergone but very little change since he was "a herd on Yarrow." His face and hands are still as brown as if he lived entirely *sub dio.* His very hair has a coarse stringiness about it, which proves beyond dispute its utter ignorance of all the arts of the friseur; and hangs in playful whips and cords about his ears, in a style of the most perfect innocence imaginable. His mouth, which, when he smiles, nearly cuts the totality of his face in twain, is an object that would make the Chevalier Ruspini die with indignation; for his teeth have been allowed to grow where they listed, and as they listed, presenting more resemblance, in arrangement, (and colour too,) to a body of crouching sharp-shooters, than to any more regular species of array. The effect of a forehead, towering with a true poetic grandeur above such features as these, and of an eye that illuminates their surface with the genuine lightnings of genius,—

> ———"an eye that, under brows
> Shaggy and deep, has meanings, which are brought
> From years of youth,——"

these are things which I cannot so easily trans-

fer to my paper. Upon the whole, his exterior reminded me very much of some of Wordsworth's descriptions of his Pedlar :—

> ———" plain his garb,
> Such as might suit a rustic sire prepared
> For Sabbath duties; yet he is a man
> Whom no one could have passed without remark.
> Active and nervous is his gait. His limbs
> And his whole figure breathe intelligence."

Indeed, I can scarcely help suspecting, that that great poet, who has himself thought so much

> " On Man, on Nature, and on Human Life,
> Musing in solitude" ——

must have thought more than once of the intellectual history of the Ettrick Shepherd, when he drew that noble sketch, which no man can ridicule, unless from a vicious want of faith in the greatness of human nature. Neither is there any thing unlikely in the supposition in another point of view, for Wastle tells me, the two poets have often met, and always expressed the highest admiration for each other. He says,

> " From his sixth year, the boy of whom I speak,
> In summer tended cattle on the hills."

I believe poor Hogg tended them in winter also.

———" From that bleak tenement,
He many an evening to his distant home
In solitude returning, saw the hills
Grow larger in the darkness, all alone
Beheld the stars come out above his head,
And travell'd through the wood, with no one near
To whom he might confess the things he saw.
So the foundations of his mind were laid.
In such communion, not from terror free,
While yet a child, and long before his time,
He had perceived the presence and the power
Of greatness; and deep feeling had impressed
Great objects on his mind, with portraiture
And colour so distinct, that on his mind
They lay like substances, and almost seemed
To haunt the bodily sense."

Those who have read the Shepherd's latest writings, as I fear you have not done, would find still stronger confirmation of my idea in what follows :—

———" Thus informed,
He had small need of books; for many a tale,
Traditionary round the mountains hung,
And many a legend, peopling the dark woods,
Nourished imagination in her youth.

* * *

> The life and death of Martyrs, who sustained,
> With will inflexible, those fearful pangs
> Triumphantly displayed in records left,
> Of persecution and the Covenant—Times
> Whose echo rings through Scotland to this hour."

But I must not think of discussing the Ettrick Shepherd in a single letter.—As for the Burns's dinner, I really cannot in honesty pretend to give you any very exact history of the latter part of its occurrences. As the night kept advancing, the company kept diminishing, till about one o'clock in the morning, when we found ourselves reduced to a small staunch party of some five-and-twenty, men not to be shaken from their allegiance to King Bacchus, by any changes in his administration—in other words, men who by no means considered it as necessary to leave the room, because one, or even because two presidents had set them such an example. The last of these presidents, Mr Patrick Robertson, a young counsellor of very rising reputation and most pleasant manners, made his approach to the chair amidst such a thunder of acclamation as seems to be issuing from the cheeks of the Bacchantes, when Silenus gets astride on his ass, in the famous picture of Rubens. Once

in the chair, there was no fear of his quitting it while any remained to pay homage due to his authority. He made speeches, one chief merit of which consisted (unlike Epic poems) in their having neither beginning, middle, nor end. He sung songs in which music was not. He proposed toasts in which meaning was not—But over everything that he said there was flung such a radiance of sheer mother-wit, that there was no difficulty in seeing the want of *meaning* was no involuntary want. By the perpetual dazzle of his wit, by the cordial flow of his good humour, but above all, by the cheering influence of his broad happy face, seen through its halo of punch-steam (for even the chair had by this time got enough of the juice of the grape,) he contrived to diffuse over us all, for a long time, one genial atmosphere of unmingled mirth. How we got out of that atmosphere, I cannot say I remember, —but am, notwithstanding,

Ever your's,

P. M.

LETTER XIII.

TO THE SAME.

Dear David,

When you reproach me with being so long at the seat of a celebrated University, and yet preserving the most profound silence concerning tutors, professors, examinations, degrees, and all the other mighty items of academical life, you do no more than I might have expected from one, who has derived his only ideas of an university from Oxford and Cambridge. In these places, the university is everything; the houses of the town seem merely to be the appendages of the colleges, and the townsmen themselves only a better sort of menials to the gownsmen. If you hear a bell ring there, you may be sure it is meant to call together those whose duty it is to attend in some chapel, hall, or lecture-room; if you see a man pull off his hat in the street,

you may be sure it is in honour of some tuft, sleeve, or scarf, well accustomed to such obeisances. Here the case is very different. The academical buildings, instead of forming the bulk and centre of every prospect—instead of shooting up towers and domes and battlements in every direction, far above, not only the common dwellings of the citizens, but the more ancient and more lofty groves of oak and elm, in which, for centuries, they have been embosomed —instead of all this proud and sweeping extent of venerable magnificence, the academical buildings of Edinburgh are piled together in one rather obscure corner of a splendid city, which would scarcely be less splendid than it is, although they were removed altogether from its precincts. In the society among which I have lived since my arrival here, (and I assure you its circle has been by no means a very confined one,) I am convinced there are few subjects about which so little is said or thought, as the University of Edinburgh. I rather think, that a well-educated stranger, who had no previous knowledge that an university had its seat in this place, (if we can suppose the existence of such a person,) might sojourn in Edinburgh for many weeks, without making the discovery for him-

self. And yet, from all I can hear, the number of resident members of this university is seldom below two thousand, and among those by whom their education is conducted, there are unquestionably some, whose names, in whatever European university they might be placed, could not fail to be regarded as among the most illustrious of its ornaments.

The first and most obvious cause of the smallness of attention attracted to the University of Edinburgh, is evidently the want of any academical dress. There are no *gownsmen* here, and this circumstance is one which, with our Oxford ideas, would alone be almost sufficient to prove the non-existence of an university. This, however, is a small matter after all, and rather an effect than a cause. The members of the university do not reside, as ours do, within the walls of colleges; they go once or twice every day, as it may happen, to hear a discourse pronounced by one of their professors; but, beyond this, they have little connection of any kind with the *locale* of the academical buildings; and it follows very naturally, that they feel themselves to have comparatively a very slight connection with academical life. They live in their fathers' houses, (for a great proportion of them

belong to the city itself,) or they inhabit lodgings in whatever part of the city they please; and they dine alone or together, just as it suits them; they are never compelled to think of each other beyond the brief space of the day in which they are seated in the same lecture-room; in short, the whole course and tenor of their existence is unacademical, and by persons thinking and living in a way so independent of each other, and so dispersed among the crowds of a city such as Edinburgh, any such badges of perpetual distinction as our cap and gown, could scarcely fail to be regarded as very absurd and disagreeable incumbrances. The want of these, however, has its disadvantages as well as its advantages, even in regard to their own individual comfort.

So far as I comprehend the first part of the general system of University education in this place, it is as follows. The students enter at fourteen, fifteen, or even much earlier—exactly as used to be the case in our own universities two centuries ago; for I remember it is mentioned in Lord Herbert of Cherbury's Memoirs, (and that, too, as a matter by no means out of the common course,) that he was not twelve years old when he came to reside at Oxford. When they enter, they are

far less skilled in Latin than boys of the same age at any of our great schools; and with the exception of those educated at one particular school in Edinburgh, they have no Greek. Their acquisition of these languages is not likely to be very rapid under the professors of Greek and Latin, to whose care the University entrusts them; for each of these gentleman has to do with a class of at least two hundred pupils; and in such a class, it would be impossible to adopt, with the least effect, any other method of teaching than that by formal prælections. Now, of all ways, this is the least adapted for seizing and commanding the attention of a set of giddy urchins, who, although addressed by the name of "Gentlemen," are in fact, as full of the spirit of boyish romping, as at any previous period of their lives. A slight attempt is sometimes made to keep alive their attention, by examining them the one day concerning what they had heard on the other; and this plan, I understand, begins to be carried into execution, in a more regular way than heretofore. But it is not possible to examine so great a number of boys, either very largely or very closely; and I should be very apprehensive, that their many temptations to idleness must in general overcome, with lit-

tle difficulty, this one slender stimulus to exertion.

As for the professors of these languages, the nature of the duties which they perform, of course reduces them to something quite different from what we should understand by the name they bear. They are not employed in assisting young men to study, with greater facility or advantage, the poets, the historians, or the philosophers of antiquity; nay, it can scarcely be said, in any proper meaning of the term, that they are employed in teaching the principles of language. They are schoolmasters in the strictest sense of the word—for their time is spent in laying the very lowest part of the foundation, on which a superstructure of erudition must be reared. A profound and accomplished scholar may, at times, be found discharging these duties; but most assuredly there is no need either of depth or of elegance, to enable him to discharge them as well as the occasion requires. The truth is, however, that very few men give themselves the trouble to become fine scholars, without being pushed on by many kinds of stimulus, and I know of no very powerful stimulus within the action of which these gentlemen are placed. They have not the am-

bition and delight of making their pupils fine scholars,—feelings which, in England, are productive of so many admirable results—because the system of the University is such, that their pupils are hurried out of their hands long before they could hope to inspire them with any thing like a permanent love for studies attended with so many difficulties. Nay, they have not the ambition and delight of elevating themselves to a high and honourable rank in public estimation, by their own proficiency in classical lore; for this is the only country in civilized Europe, (whatever may be the cause of the phenomenon) wherein attainments of that kind are regarded with a very slender degree of admiration. How this may have happened, I know not; but the fact is certain, that for these two hundred years, Scotland has produced no man of high reputation, whose fame rested, or rests, upon what we call classical learning; nor, at the present day, does she possess any one who might be entitled to form an exception to this rule of barrenness.

Before these Boys, therefore, have learned Latin enough to be able to read any Latin author with facility, and before they have learned Greek enough to enable them to understand thoroughly any one line in any one Greek book in

existence, they are handed over to the professor of Logic, Rhetoric, and Belles-lettres, *quasi jam linguaram satis periti.* You and I know well enough that it is no trifling matter to acquire any thing like a mastery, a true and effectual command, over the great languages of antiquity; we well remember how many years of busy exertion it cost us in boyhood—yes, and in manhood too—before we found ourselves in a condition to make any complete use of the treasures of wit and wisdom to which these glorious languages are the keys. When we then are told that the whole of the classical part of Scottish academical education is completed within the space of two years, and this with boys of the age I have mentioned, there is no occasion for saying one word more about the matter. We see and know, as well as if we had examined every lad in Edinburgh, that not one of them who has enjoyed no better means of instruction than these, can possibly know any thing more than the merest and narrowest rudiments of classical learning. This one simple fact is a sufficient explanation, not only of the small advances made by the individuals of this nation in the paths of erudition, strictly so called—but of much that is

peculiar, and, if one may be permitted to say so, of much that is highly disagreeable too, in the general tone of the literature wherein the national mind is and has been expressed. It shews, at once, the origin of much that distinguishes the authors of Scotland, not from those of England alone, but from those of all the other nations of Europe. I do not mean that which honourably distinguishes them, (for of such distinction also they have much,) but that which distinguishes them in a distressing and degrading manner—their ignorance of the great models of antiquity—nay, the irreverent spirit in which they have the audacity to speak concerning men and works, whom (considered as a class) modern times have as yet in vain attempted to equal.

This is a subject of which it would require a bolder man than I am to say so much, to almost any Scotchman whose education has been entirely conducted in his own country. If you venture only to tread upon the hem of that garment of self-sufficiency, in which the true Scotchman wraps himself, he is sure to turn round upon you as if you had aimed a dagger at his vitals; and as to this particular point of attack,

he thinks he has most completely punished you for your presumption, (in the first place,) and checked your courage for the future, (in the second,) when he has launched out against you one or two of those sarcasms about "longs and shorts," and "the superiority of things to words," with which we have, till of late, been familiar in the pages of the Edinburgh Review. A single arrow from that redoubtable quiver, is hurled against you, and the archer turns away with a smile, nothing doubting that your business is done—nor, indeed, is it necessary to prolong the contest; for although you may not feel yourself to be entirely conquered, you must, at least, have seen enough to convince you, that you have no chance of making your adversary yield. If he have not justice on his side, he is, at least, tenacious of his purpose, and it would be a waste of trouble to attempt shaking his opinions either of you or of himself.

The rest of the world, however, may be excused, if, *absente reo*, they venture to think and to speak a little more pertinaciously concerning the absurdity of this neglect of classical learning, which the Scotch do not deny or palliate, but acknowledge and defend. We may be excused if we hesitate a little to admit the weight of rea-

sons from which the universal intellect of Christendom has always dissented, and at this moment dissents as firmly as ever, and to doubt whether the results of the system adopted in Scotland have been so very splendid, as to authorize the tone of satisfied assurance, in which Scotchmen conceive themselves entitled to deride those who adhere to the older and more general style of discipline.

It would be very useless to address to one, who has not given to the writers of antiquity some portion of such study as they deserve, any description of the chaste and delightful feelings with which the labours of such study are rewarded—far more to demand his assent to conclusions derived from descriptions which he would not fail to treat as so purely fantastical. The *incredulus odi* sort of disdain, with which several intelligent and well-educated men in this place have treated me, when I ventured in their presence to say a few words concerning that absurd kind of self-denial, abstinence, and *mortificatio spiritus*, which seems to be practised by the gentlemen of Scotland, in regard to this most rational and most enduring species of pleasures—the air of mingled scorn and pity, with which they listened to me, and the condescending kind of mock

assent which they expressed in reply, have sufficiently convinced me that the countrymen of David Hume are not over-fond of taking any thing upon trust. The language of their looks being interpreted, is, " Yes—yes—it is all very well to speak about feelings, and so forth; but is it not sad folly to waste so many years upon mere words?"——Of all the illogical, irrational sorts of delusion, with which ignorance ever came to the consolation of self-love, surely this is the most palpably absurd—The darkness of it may be *felt*.—During the few short and hasty months in which the young gentlemen of Scotland go through the ceremonious quackery which they are pleased to call *learning Greek*, it is very true that they are occupied with *mere words*, and that, too, in the meanest sense of the phrase. They are seldom very sure whether any one word be a noun or a verb, and therefore they are *occupied* about words. The few books, or fragments of books, which they read, are comprehended with a vast expense of labour, if they be comprehended at all—with continual recurrence to some wretched translation, English or Latin, or still more laborious recurrence to the unmanageable bulk and unreadable types of a Lexicon. It is no wonder, that they tell you all their

time was spent upon *mere words*, and it would be a mighty wonder if the time so spent were recollected by them with any considerable feeling of kindliness. I must own, I am somewhat of my Lord Byron's opinion, concerning the absurdity of allowing boys to learn the ancient languages, from books the charm of which consists in any very delicate and evanescent beauties—any *curiosa felicitas* either of ideas or expressions. I also remember the time, when I complained to myself (to others I durst not) that I was occupied with mere words—and to this hour, I feel, as the noble Childe does, the miserable effects of that most painful kind of exercise, which with us is soon happily changed for something of a very different nature—but which here in Scotland gives birth to almost the only idea connected with the phrase *studying Greek*.

But that a people so fond of the exercise of reason as the Scotch, should really think and speak as if it were possible for those who spend many years in the study of the classics, to be all the while occupied about mere words, this, I confess, is a thing that strikes me as being what Mr Coleridge would call, "One of the voonders above voonders."—How can the thing be done? It is not in the power of the greatest index-making or

bibliographical genius in the world to do so, were he to make the endeavour with all the zeal of his vocation. It is not possible, in the first place, to acquire any knowledge of the mere words—the vocables—of any ancient language, without reading very largely in the books which remain to us out of the ruins of its literature. Rich above all example as the literature of Greece once was, and rich as the pure literature of Greece is even at this moment, when compared with that of the Romans, it so happens that all the classical Greek works in the world occupy but a trifling space in any man's library; and were it possible to read philosophers and historians as quickly as novellists or tourists, they might all be read through in no very alarming space of time by any circulating-library glutton who might please to attack them. Without reading, and being familiar with the whole of these books, or at least without doing something little short of this, it is absolutely impossible for any man to acquire even a good verbal knowledge of Greek. Now, that any man should make himself familiar with these books, without at the same time forming some pretty tolerable acquaintance with the subjects of which they treat—not even a Scotchman, I think, will ven-

ture to assert. And that any man can make himself acquainted with these books (in this sense of the phrase,) without having learned something that is worthy of being known—over and above the words submitted to his eyes in their pages—I am quite sure, no person of tolerable education in Christendom will assert, unless he be a Scotchman.

To follow the history of great and remarkable nations, as narrated by the clear and graphic genius of their own writers—and so to become acquainted with human nature as displaying itself under the guise of manners very different from our own,—learning thereby, of necessity, to understand both our own manners, and our own nature, better than we could otherwise have done —this is one of the first exercises in which the mind of the classical student must be engaged, and this alone, were this all, might be more than enough to redeem him from the reproach of being a mere hunter of words. There are only three great objects which can ever draw to them in a powerful manner the spirits of enlightened men, and occupy with inexhaustible resources the leisure that is left to them by the State of which they are members, and the Society with which their days are linked;—the Philosophy of life,

the enjoyment arising from the Fine Arts, and the study of History. All the three are well fitted to exalt, and enrich, in many ways, the internal and eternal parts of our nature. But neither of the two first-mentioned can be compared in this respect with the study of history, the only study which presents to all our endeavours and aspirations after higher intellectual cultivation, a fast middle-point, and grappling-place,—the effects, namely, the outward and visible effects, which the various modifications of society and education have already produced upon man, his destinies, and his powers. Without the knowledge of this great and mighty *past*, the philosophy of life, with whatever wit she may enchant, with whatever eloquence she may charm us, can never effectually lift our view from the ground on which our feet tread—*the present*—from the narrow and limited circle of our own customs, and those of our immediate neighbours and contemporaries. Even the higher philosophy, the boldest, and in a certain measure, therefore, the most remarkable of all the exertions of human intellect, would in vain, without the aid of history, attempt to explain to us the formation and developement of our own faculties and feelings; because without it, she could not fail

to present us with more of dark and inexplicable enigmas, than of clear and intelligible results. History, on the other hand, when she is not confined to the mere chronicling of names, years, and external events, but seizes and expands before us the spirit of great men, great times, and great actions, is in herself alone a true and entire philosophy, intelligible in all things, and sure in all things; and above all other kinds of philosophy, rich both in the materials and the means of application. The value of the fine arts, in regard to the higher species of mental cultivation, is admitted by all whose opinion is of any avail. But even these, without that earnestness of intention, and gravity of power, which they derive from their connection with the actual experience of man, his destiny, and his history—would be in danger of degenerating into an empty sport, a mere plaything of the imagination. The true sense and purpose of the highest and most admirable productions of the imitative arts, (and of poetry among the rest,) are then only clearly and powerfully revealed to us, when we are able to transport ourselves into the air and spirit of the times in which they were produced, or whose image it is their object to represent.

If philosophy (strictly so called) grapples chiefly with our reason, and the Fine Arts with our feelings and imagination, History, on the other hand, claims a more universal possession of us, and considers the whole man, and all the powers of his soul, as alike within her controul. So, at least, she should do, when she does what is worthy of her high destination;—and thus it is that History occupies, in and by herself, in that glorious circle which embraces all the higher cultivation of man, if not the most splendid place, at least the most necessary. Without her, we should want the link and bond of connection which fastens the whole mighty structure together. One great, and, above all others, most interesting field, is opened for the study of history, by the extraordinary and unforeseen events which characterize *the present.* The remembrance of the great *past,*—the knowledge of its occurrences and its spirit, is the only thing which can furnish us with a fair and quiet point of view from which to survey the *present*—a standard by which to form just conclusions respecting the comparative greatness or littleness of that which passes before our eyes. Here then there is another instance of a coincidence which

may often enough be observed in human affairs. The simplest of things is also the highest. History forms the apparently light and easy commencement of the education of the boy; and yet the more the mind of the man is informed and accomplished, the more manifold occasion will be found to make use of the stores of history,—the more will he find himself called upon to exert all his power, in order to penetrate and comprehend the deep sense of history. For, as there is no man of reflection so acute, that he can suppose himself to have thoroughly understood the scope of history, and no man of research so diligent, that he can suppose himself to have obtained possession of all the materials of history, so neither is there any man so low or so high, that he can suppose himself to be placed in a situation, wherein his own examination of that which is recorded may not be of essential benefit to himself, in regard to that which is and is to come.

Now, where and how is History to be studied? I answer, first and best in the great historians of antiquity. The men whom these present to our view, have embodied, in their lives and persons, almost all that we can think of as forming

the true greatness and true honour of our nature. The events which they describe, however small the apparent sphere of their influence may sometimes be, were those which decided the fate of nations which for ages ruled and disciplined the world, and the influence of whose rule and discipline is still preserved, and likely to be preserved, even in parts of the earth to which their actual and corporeal sway never found access. The thoughts, and feelings, and actions of these men and these nations, must forever be regarded, by all who can understand them, as the best *examples* or *patterns* of us, our nature, our powers, and our destinies. We are the intellectual progeny of these men. Even their blood flows in our veins—at least some tincture—but without them what had our Spirits been ? That question cannot be answered—but, at least, they had not been what they are. In every thing which we see, hear, and do, some knowledge of them and their nature is taken for granted—that is a postulate in all communication between men who can read and write in Christendom. For what reason, therefore, should we be satisfied with a superficial knowledge of that, whereof knowledge is practically admitted to be not only an ornament, but a necessary ? For what reason should

we neglect to store our minds, when they are most open for impressions, with full, clear, and indelible memorials of the mighty *past?*

It is possible, it is often said, to know all that is to be known about the ancients, without being acquainted with their languages. The assertion is a contradiction in terms. The most true, the most lasting, the most noble creation by which an independent nation seeks to manifest her spirit and her independence, is her formation and cultivation of an independent speech. And it is impossible to know such a nation as she deserves to be known, without knowing also, and that thoroughly, this the first and best of her productions. Her language is her history. What, after all, are battles, and sieges, and kings, and consuls, and conquerors, to the processes of thought, and the developements of feeling? Wherein does the essence of a nation exist, if it be not in the character of her mind? and how is that mind to be penetrated or understood, if we neglect the pure and faithful mirror in which of old it has stamped its likeness—her language? Men may talk as they choose about translations; there is in brevity and in truth, no such thing as a translation. The bold outline is, indeed, preserved, but the gentle, delicate, minute shadings vanish.

And if our study be MAN, is it not clear enough that the more delicate and minute these may be, the more likely are they to reveal the true springs of his working?

The advantages to be derived from a more patient and accurate course of classical study than prevails in Scotland, might be explained in a way that, to every rational person, could not have less than the power of demonstration. Of the poetry, and, above all, of the philosophy of antiquity, it would be easy to speak even at more length than of her history. But the truth is, that the whole of these things hang together in indissoluble union, and no man could, if he would, understand any one of them well, without understanding a very great deal of the others also. In Scotland, they understand, they care about none of the three. I have conversed with a very great number of her literary men—and surely it is not necessary to say any thing in praise of their manifold general attainments—but I honestly tell you, that I have not yet conversed with any one, who seemed to me ever to have gone through any thing like a complete course, either of Greek poetry or Greek history. As for Greek philosophy, beyond Xenophon's Memorabilia, the Phaedon, and Aristotle's Poet-

ick, I have never heard any allusion made to the existence of any books connected with that subject; and I am convinced, that a man who had read through Plato or Aristotle, or even who was entitled to say that he had any tolerable acquaintance with the works of either of these great authors, would be scarcely more of a wonder at Otaheite than in Edinburgh. But this indeed it is extremely unnecessary to explain to you, who have read and admired so much of the works of Dugald Stewart; for nothing can be more clear to the eyes of the initiated, than that this great and enlightened man has been throughout contented to derive his ideas of the Greek philosophy from very secondary sources. When he dies, there will not, most assuredly, be found among his books, as there was among those of David Hume, an interleaved copy of Duvall's Aristotle, And if such be *his* ignorance, (which, I doubt not, he himself would be candid enough to acknowledge without hesitation,) what may we not suppose to be the Cimmerian obscurity which hangs over his worshippers and disciples?—Without the genius, which often suggests to him much of what kindred genius had suggested to the philosophers of antiquity, and which still more often enables him to

pass, by different steps, to the same point at which these had arrived,—the pupils of this illustrious man are destitute of the only qualities which could have procured any pardon for the errors of their master. The darkness is with them " total eclipse."

I have wandered, you will say, even more widely than is my custom. But you must keep in recollection the terms on which I agreed to write to you, during this my great northern tour. As for the subject from which I have wandered, viz. the Greek and Latin Muses of the University of Edinburgh, I assure you I feel very easy under the idea of having treated these ladies with slender courtesy. Their reputation is extremely low, and I verily believe they deserve no better. They are of the very worst and most contemptible of all kinds of coquettes; for they give a little to every body, and much to no one.

The Professors of the two languages here are both, however, very respectable men in their way; that is, they would both of them do admirable things, if they had any call upon their ambition. Mr Christison, the Professor of Latin, or, as their style is, of *humanity*, is a very great reader of all kinds of books, and, what is rather

singular in one fond of excursive reading, is a very diligent and delighted student of the higher mathematics. I went to hear his prælection the other day, and after the boys were sent away, began to ask him a few questions about the system adopted in their tuition, but in vain. He insisted upon talking of fluxions, and fluxions only; and, as I know nothing of fluxions, I was glad to break up the conference. With him, if a pun may be allowed,

"———*labitur* et *labetur*, in omne volubilis aevum."

Mr Dunbar, the Professor of Greek, has published several little things in the Cambridge Classical Researches, and is certainly very much above the common run of scholars. I observe by the way, that in one of his Latin title-pages, he subjoins to his name a set of English initials.

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P. M.

LETTER XV.

TO THE SAME.

After Mr Christison and Mr Dunbar are supposed to have given their pupils as much Latin and Greek as people of sense ought to be troubled with, they are transferred to the Professor of Logic, and recorded in the books of the University, as students of philosophy. The style used by their new professor would, however, convey to a stranger a very erroneous notion of the duties in reality allotted to him. Logic, according to our acceptation of the word, is one of the least and last of the things which this gentleman (who is said to be a person of great shrewdness and masculine judgment) is supposed to teach. The true business of Dr Ritchie is to inform the minds of his pupils with some first faint ideas of the Scotch systems of metaphysics and morals—to explain to them the rudiments of the great vocabulary of Reid and Stewart, and fit them, in

some measure, for plunging next year into the midst of all the light and all the darkness scattered over the favourite science of this country, by the Professor of Moral Philosophy, Dr Thomas Brown.

I could not find leisure for attending the prælections of all the Edinburgh professors; but I was resolved to hear, at least, one discourse of the last mentioned celebrated person. So I went one morning in good time, and took my place in a convenient corner of that class-room, to which the rising metaphysicians of the north resort with so much eagerness. Before the professor arrived, I amused myself with surveying the well-covered rows of benches with which the area of the large room was occupied. I thought I could distinguish the various descriptions of speculative young men come thither from the different quarters of Scotland, fresh from the first zealous study of Hume, Berkeley, and Locke, and quite sceptical whether the timber upon which they sat had any real existence, or whether there was such a thing as heat in the grate which was blazing before them. On one side might be seen, perhaps, a Pyrrhonist from Inverness-shire, deeply marked with the small-pox, and ruminating upon our not seeing double with two eyes. The

gaunt and sinewy frame of this meditative mountaineer—his hard legs set wide asunder, as if to take full advantage of their more usual integument, the philabeg—his features, bearing so many marks of the imperfect civilization and nomadic existence of his progenitors—all together could not fail to strike me as rather out of place in such a situation as this. On the other side might be remarked one, who seemed to be an embryo clergyman, waiting anxiously for some new lights, which he expected the coming lecture would throw upon the great system of Cause and Effect, and feeling rather qualmish after having read that morning Hume's Sceptical Solution of Sceptical Doubts. Nearer the professor's table was probably a crack member of some crack debating-club, with a grin of incorrigible self-complacency shining through his assumed frown of profound reflection—looking, as the French say, as grave as a pot-de-chambre —and longing, above all things, for seven o'clock in the evening, when he hoped himself to assume a conspicuous position behind a green table, with a couple of candles upon it, and fully refute the objections of his honourable and eloquent friend who spoke last. A little farther to the right might be observed a fine, healthy, well-thriven

lad from Haddington-shire, but without the slightest trace of metaphysics in his countenance —one who would have thought himself much better employed in shooting crows on Leith sands, and in whom the distinction between Sensation and Volition excited nothing but chagrin and disgust.

Throughout the whole of this motley assemblage, there was a prodigious mending of pens, and folding of paper, every one, as it appeared, having arrived with the determination to carry away the *Dicta Magistri*, not in his head only, but in his note-book. Some, after having completed their preparations for the business of this day, seemed to be conning over the monuments of their yesterday's exertion, and getting as firm a grapple as possible of the last links of the chain whereof a new series was about to be expanded before them. There was a very care-worn kind of hollowness in many of their eyes, as if they had been rather over-worked in the business of staring upon stenography ; and not a few of their noses were pinched and sharpened, as it were, with the habitual throes and agonies of extreme hesitation. As the hour began to strike, there arose a simultaneous clamour of coughing and spitting, and blowing of noses, as if all were pre-

pared for listening long to the lecturer, without disturbing him or their neighbours; and such was the infectiousness of their zeal, that I caught myself fidgetting upon my seat, and clearing out for action like the rest. At last, in came the professor, with a pleasant smile upon his face, arrayed in a black Geneva cloak, over a snuff-coloured coat and buff waistcoat. He mounted to his elbow-chair, and laid his papers on the desk before him, and in a moment all was still as the Tomb of the Capulets—every eye filled with earnestness, and every pen filled with ink.

Doctor Brown has a physiognomy very expressive of mildness and quiet contemplativeness; but when he got fairly into the middle of his subject, his features kindled amazingly, and he went through some very subtle and abstruse disquisitions with great keenness and animation. I have seen few persons who pursued the intellectual chase with so much ardour; but as I observed before, it did not appear as if all his pupils were sufficiently well mounted or equipped to be able to keep up with him. His elocution is distinct and elegant, and in those parts of his subject which admitted of being tastefully handled, there was a flow of beautiful language, as

finely delivered as it was finely conceived. It is very much his practice to introduce quotations from the poets, which not only afford the best illustrations of his own speculations, but are, at the same time, valuable, as furnishing a pleasing relaxation to the mind of the hearer in the midst of the toils of abstract thought. The variety of delightful images which he thus brings before the view, refreshes the mental eye, and enables it to preserve its power of examination much longer than it could do, were it condemned to experience no relief from the dry mazes of abstract disquisition. Dr Brown, in this respect, imitates with great wisdom and success, the example of Harris, whose intimate knowledge of Shakespeare has done more good to his books, and afforded more delight to his readers, than perhaps any one of all his manifold accomplishments. Nay, I might have quoted the still higher example of the Stagyrite himself, who produces an effect equally delightful by his perpetual citations from Homer, or, as he calls him, Ὁ Ποιητης.

The immediate predecessor of Dr Brown, in this important chair, was no less a person than Dugald Stewart; and it was easy to observe, in the midst of many lesser deviations, that the ge-

neral system of this great man's philosophy is adhered to by his successor, and that he is, in truth, one of his intellectual children. I have seen Mr Stewart once since I came to Edinburgh, but it was in a very hasty manner, so that I shall not attempt to describe him to you at present. I intend, before I leave Scotland, to pass very near the place of his residence, (for he now very seldom leaves the country,) and shall perhaps find an opportunity to become better acquainted with him. Of the style of philosophizing adopted by him and his successor, I need not say any thing to you, who are so much better acquainted with the works of both than I am. I may just venture to hint, however, that their mode of studying the human mind, is perhaps better adapted for throwing light upon the intellectual faculties, and upon the association of ideas, than upon human nature in general. There can be no doubt that the mind is, like physical nature, a theatre of causes and effects; but it appears extremely doubtful whether the same mechanical mode of observation, which enables us to understand the qualities of material objects, and the effects which they are capable of producing on each other, will be equally

successful in elucidating the generation of human thoughts and feelings. In observing the manner in which a train of ideas passes through the mind, is it possible to notice and understand all that is really going on within us? Can every thing which appears be referred to its true source? From the mode in which images and conceptions succeed each other, we may perhaps infer some laws of suggestion—and from observing the sequence of propositions, we may arrive at the principles according to which intellectual operations take place—but such, probably, will be the most important results of intellectual operations, conducted according to Mr Stewart's method. The scope and tendency of the different affections can never be gathered from the analyses of particular trains of thought, or by such a microscopic and divided mode of observation, as that which consists in watching the succession of ideas as they arise in the mind. It seems, indeed, quite improbable, that the affections ever can be made an object of science, or that their qualities and relations can ever be properly expressed in abstract propositions. Poetry and eloquence are alone capable of exemplifying them; and one may gather more true knowledge

of all that most valuable, and perhaps most divine part of our nature, by studying one of Mr Wordsworth's small pieces, such as Michael, the Brothers, or the Idiot Boy—or following the broken catches of multitudinous feelings, in the speeches of one such character as Madge Wildfire, than by a whole life-time spent in studying and imitating the style of observation exemplified by Mr Stewart.

In regard to intellectual operations, it may be said, that a knowledge of their laws confers power, because it teaches method in conducting them. In regard to the laws of association, it may also be said, that knowledge is power, because it enables us to continue the succession of our ideas. But it appears very questionable, whether the empire of science can be extended much farther in this quarter. The power which is conferred by knowledge, is always of a merely calculating and mechanical sort, and consists in nothing higher than the adaptation of means to ends—and to suppose that man's moral being can ever be subjected to, or swayed by, a power so much lower than itself, is almost as revolting as the theory which refers all ideas and emotions to the past impressions upon the senses.

In studying the nature of the human affections, one object should be,—to obtain repose and satisfaction for the moral feelings, by discriminating between good and evil. Knowledge is nothing in a scientific point of view, unless it can be accumulated and transferred from individual to individual, and unless it be as valid in one person's hands as in those of another; but this could never be the case with regard to a knowledge of the moral feelings.

I do not throw out these little remarks with a view to disparage the usefulness or excellence of Dugald Stewart's mode of philosophizing, so far as it goes. But it would be a very cold and barren way of thinking, to suppose, that through the medium of that species of observation which he chiefly makes use of, we have it in our power to become completely acquainted with human nature. And again, the habit of reposing too much confidence in the powers resulting from science, would have a tendency to terminate in utter supineness, and lethargy of character among mankind; for, if it were expected that every thing could be forced to spring up as the mechanical and necessary result of scientific calculations, the internal springs of the mind would

no longer be of the same consequence as before, and the accomplishment of a great many things might then be devolved upon, and intrusted to, an extraneous power, lodged in the hands of speculative men.

The true characteristic of science consists in this,—that it is a thing which can be communicated to, and made use of by, all men who are endowed with an adequate share of mere intellect. The philosophy of moral feeling must always, on the other hand, approach nearer to the nature of poetry, whose influence varies according as it is perused by individuals of this or that character, or taste. The finest opening to any book of psycology and ethics in the world, is that of Wordsworth's Excursion. That great poet, who is undoubtedly the greatest master that has for a long time appeared in the walks of the highest philosophy in England, has better notions than any Scotch metaphysician is likely to have, of the true sources, as well as the true effects, of the knowledge of man.

"——— Urania, I shall need
Thy guidance, or a greater muse, if such
Descend to earth, or dwell in highest Heaven!
For I must tread on shadowy ground, must sink
Deep—and, aloft ascending, breathe in worlds,

To which the Heaven of Heavens is but a veil.—
All strength—all terror, single or in bands,
That ever was put forth in personal form ;
Jehovah—with his thunder, and the choir
Of shouting angels, and the empyreal thrones,
I pass them unalarmed. Not Chaos, not
The darkest pit of lowest Erebus,
Nor aught of blinder vacancy scooped out
By help of dreams, can breed such fear and awe
As fall upon us often, when we look
Into our Minds—into the Mind of Man,
My haunt, and the main region of my song."

After such words as these, I durst not venture upon anything of a lowlier kind.

Farewell,

P. M.

MR PLANTA.

LETTER XV.

TO THE SAME.

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* * NEXT day I went to hear Professor Playfair's lecture. I found him already engaged in addressing his class when I entered, but took my seat close by the door, so quietly as not to attract any notice from him. It was a very pleasing thing to see this fine old Archimedes with his reposed demeanour—(such as I have already described it to you)—standing beside his table covered with models, which he was making use of in some demonstrations relative to mechanical forces. There is something in the certainty and precision of the exact sciences, which communicates a stillness to the mind, and which, by calling in our thoughts from their own giddy

and often harassing rounds, harmonizes our nature with the serenity of intellectual pleasure. The influence of such studies is very well exemplified in the deportment of this professor. In lecturing, he expresses himself in an easy and leisurely manner, highly agreeable to the listener, although he does not seem to study continuity or flow of diction, and although his delivery is sometimes a good deal impeded by hesitation with regard to the words he is to employ. I have already described his features to you; but perhaps their effect was finer while he was engaged in this way, than I had before been prepared to find. I think one may trace in his physiognomy a great deal of that fine intellectual taste, which dictated the illustrations of the Huttonian Theory.*

I waited to pay my respects to the professor, after the dismission of his class, and he invited me to walk with him to the New Observatory upon the Calton Hill. This building, which is not yet completed, owes its existence entirely to

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* This illustrious man is another that has died since my Letters were first published. Mr Leslie, as was right, has succeeded him in the Physical Chair.

the liberality of a few private lovers of astronomy, and promises to form a beautiful and lasting monument of their taste. Mr Playfair himself laid the foundation-stone of it last year, and already it presents to the eye, what is, in my humble judgment, the finest architectural outline in the whole of this city. The building is not a large one; but its situation is such, as to render that a matter of comparatively trivial moment. Its fine portico, with a single range of Doric pillars supporting a graceful pediment, shaped exactly like that of the Parthenon—and over that again, its dome lifting itself lightly and airily in the clear mountain sky—and the situation itself, on the brink of that magnificent eminence, which I have already described to you, just where it looks towards the sea—altogether remind one of the best days of Grecian art and Grecian science, when the mariner knew Athens afar off from the Ægean, by the chaste splendour of pillars and temples that crowned the original rock of Theseus. If a few elms and plantains could be made to grow to their full dimensions around this rising structure, the effect would be the nearest thing in the world to that

of the glorious scene, which Plato has painted so divinely at the opening of his Republic.*

After surveying the new building both without and within at great length, we quitted the summit of the hill, and began our descent. About half way down, there is a church-yard, which I had not before remarked particularly, and which, indeed, as Mr Playfair mentioned, has of late been much abridged in its dimensions, by the improvements that have taken place in this quarter of the city. He proposed that we should enter the burying-ground, in order to see the place where David Hume is laid. There are few things in which I take a more true delight, than in visiting the graves of the truly illustrious dead, and I therefore embraced the proposal with eagerness. The philosopher reposes on the very margin of the rock, and above him his friends have erected a round tower, which, although in itself not very large, derives, like the Observatory on the other side, an infinite advantage from the nature of the ground on which it is placed, and is, in fact, one of the chief landmarks in every view of the city. In its form it

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* The architect of this beautiful Edifice is Mr Playfair—nephew to the late Professor.

is quite simple, and the flat roof and single urn in front give it a very classical effect. Already lichens and ferns and wall-flowers begin to creep over the surface, and a solitary willow-bush drops its long slender leaves over the edge of the roof, and breaks the outline in the air with a desolate softness.

There is no inscription, except the words DAVID HUME; and this is just as it ought to be. One cannot turn from them, and the thoughts to which they of necessity give birth, to the more humble names that cover the more humble tombs below and around, without experiencing a strange revulsion of ideas. The simple citizen, that went through the world in a course of plain and quiet existence, getting children, and accumulating money to provide for them, occupies a near section of the same sod which covers the dust of Him, who left no progeny behind him, except that of his intellect,—and whose name must survive, in that progeny, so long as Man retains any portion of the infirmity, or of the nobility of his nature. The poor man, the peasant, or the mechanic, whose laborious days provided him scantily with meat and raiment, and abundantly with sound sleep—he also has mingled his ashes with Him, whose body

had very little share either in his wants or his wishes—whose spirit alone was restless and sleepless, the Prince of Doubters. The poor homely partner of some such lowly liver, the wife and the mother and the widow, whose existence was devoted to soothing and sharing the asperities of adversity—who lived, and thought, and breathed in the affections alone, and, perhaps, yet lives somewhere in the affections of her children, or her children's children—she too, whose only hope and confidence were derived from the expectation of another life—she sleeps close beside one who walked upon the earth, not to feel, but to speculate, and was content to descend into her bosom, with scarcely one ray of hope beyond the dark and enduring sleep of nothingness.

> "These grassy heaps lie amicably close,
> Said I, like surges heaving in the wind,
> Upon the surface of a mountain's pool."—

Death, like misery, "makes us acquainted with strange bed-fellows." But surely never was a scene of strange juxta-position more pregnant with lessons of thoughtfulness than this.

Adieu,

P. M.

LETTER XVI.

TO THE SAME.

A PERSON whose eyes had been accustomed only to such places as the schools of Oxford, or Sir Christopher Pegge's lecture-room, would certainly be very much struck with the *primâ facie* mean condition of the majority of the students assembled at the prælections of these Edinburgh professors. Here and there one sees some small scattered remnant of the great flock of Dandies, trying to keep each other's high collars and stays in countenance, in a corner of the class-room; but these only heighten, by the contrast of their presence, the general effect of the slovenly and dirty mass which on every side surrounds them with its contaminating atmosphere; and upon the whole, nothing can be more distinct and visible, than that the greater part of the company are persons whose situation in life, had they

been born in England, must have left them no chance of being able to share the advantages of our academical education.

I could not help taking notice of this circumstance the other day to my friend Wastle; who not only admitted the justice of my observation, but went on to utter his comments on the fact I had observed, in a tone of opinion and sentiment, for which, I must confess, my own private reflections had by no means prepared me. So far from proceeding, as I had supposed every Scotchman in like circumstances would do, to point out the advantages which might be expected to arise, and which, in Scotland itself, had already, in fact, arisen, out of a so liberal and extensive diffusion of the higher species of education, my friend seemed to have no hesitation in condemning the whole system as being not friendly, but eminently hostile, to the true interests both of Science in general, and of his country.

Without at all understanding him in the literal sense of his words, I think it is possible that the result of his reflections may have really led him to doubt, whether the system which takes in so much may not be somewhat weakened and debased through the very extension of

its surface. I can easily believe that he may be a little doubtful whether the obvious and distinct advantages which must spring out of such a system, may not be counterbalanced, upon the whole, by the disadvantages which I should suppose must be equally inseparable from the mode of carrying it into practical effect; in other words, whether the result of good may not be less considerable in the great issue than that of evil, both to the individuals themselves, and to the community, of whose general character so much must directly and indirectly be dependent upon theirs. For myself, I say even so much with great hesitation, concerning a subject of which I cannot imagine myself to have had time or opportunity for any adequate examination; and of which, even had I possessed more of time and opportunity than I have done, I am still suspicious that my own early prejudices might render it impossible I should form a fair and impartial judgment.

The expences of University education, in the first place, amount in Scotland to no more than a very inconsiderable fraction of what they are in England. With us, we all know, a father of a family seldom thinks of sending his son to

college, unless he can afford to give him an allowance of some £300 per annum, or thereabouts. It is, no doubt, quite possible, to have apartments in a college, to attend prayers in chapel, and eat commons in hall, and to arrive, after four years' residence, at the style and dignity of a Bachelor of Arts, without having disposal of so large an income. But, taking young men as they are, and as they always have been, it is needless to expect, that any one of them will easily submit to lie under any broad and distinct mark of inferiority to his fellows; and therefore it is, that we in common parlance speak of it as being impossible to live at Oxford or Cambridge, on less expensive terms than those I have mentioned. So long as our church retains her privileges and possessions, (which, thank God, I see no likelihood of her losing,) the benefices she has in her gift will always be enough to create a regular demand for a very large number of graduates born in the higher classes of society—so large a number, indeed, that even they alone would be able to give the *tone* in any University, and any College in England. And while this is so, young men of generous dispositions, who cannot afford to keep up with the *tone* thus given, would much

rather be excused from entering upon a course of life, which must bring their incapacity of doing so continually before the eyes of other people, and of themselves. It would take a long time, moreover, to satisfy the great majority of English fathers of families, even in the more elevated walks of society, that a University education is a matter of so very great importance as to warrant them in running the risk of injuring the feelings and comfort of their children, by compelling them to submit to residing in college on inadequate means. I believe it is well, that, in England, Character is generally regarded as a far more important thing than mere Intellect: and I consider the aversion I have just described, as one very honourable manifestation of this way of thinking.

In Scotland, feelings of an equally honourable kind have led to a very opposite way of thinking and acting. The poverty of the colleges themselves, or at least of most of them, has prevented the adoption of any such regular and formal style of academical existence, as that which prevails in other countries, and most of all in our own. Instead of being possessed of large and ancient landed estates, and extensive rights

of patronage in the church, and elsewhere, and so of forming in itself a very great and formidable corporate body in the state, as the University of Oxford or Cambridge does with us; the University of Edinburgh, for example, is a very recent and contracted institution, which possesses scarcely any property or patronage of any kind beyond the money paid annually in fees by pupils to their professors, and the necessary influence which the high character of some of these individual professors, must at times give to their favour and recommendation. The want of public or corporate splendour has taken away all occasion or pretence for large expenditure in private among the members of the University; and both the corporation, and the individuals, have long since learned to consider their honour as not in the least degree affected by the absence of all those external "shews and forms," which, with us, long habit has rendered such essential parts of every academical exercise and prospect. The barriers which prevent English parents and English sons from thinking of academical education are thus entirely removed. Any young man who can afford to wear a decent coat, and live in a garret upon porridge or herrings, may, if he

pleases, come to Edinburgh, and pass through his academical career, just as creditably as is required or expected. I am assured, that the great majority of the students here, have seldom more than £30 or £40 per annum, and that very many most respectable students contrive to do with little more than half so much money.

Whatever may be thought of the results of this plan, there is no possibility that any man of good feeling should refuse his warmest admiration to the zeal both of the children and the parents by whose exertions it is carried into effect. The author of the Scotch novels has several times alluded, in a very moving way, to the hardships to which a poor man's family in Scotland will submit, for the sake of affording to one of its members even those scanty means which a Scottish University education demands. You must remember the touches of pathos which he has thrown over the otherwise ludicrous enough exertions made in this way by the parents of the redoubtable Dominie Sampson; and those of Reuben Butler, in the last Tales of My Landlord, are represented in much the same kind. I have seen a little book of Memoirs, lately written, and very well written, by a soldier of the 71st regi-

ment, in which there occurs a still more affecting, because a real picture, of circumstances exactly similar. I question whether there can be imagined a finer display of the quiet heroism of affection and principle, than is afforded in the long and resolute struggle which the poor parents maintain—the pinching penury and self-denial to which they voluntarily submit, in order that their child may be enabled to procure advantages of which themselves are destitute, and which, when obtained, cannot fail to give him thoughts and ideas such as must, in spite of nature, draw some line of separation between him and them. There cannot be a nobler instance of the neglect of self—a more striking exemplification of the sublimity of the affections. Nor can the conduct of the son himself be regarded as much less admirable. The solitary and secluded life to which he devotes so many youthful years—the hard battle which he, too, must maintain against poverty, without any near voice of love to whisper courage into his bosom—the grief which he must feel when compelled to ask that which he well knows will be freely, but which, he too much fears, will be painfully given;—all these sorrows of poverty,

united with those many sorrows and depressions which the merely intellectual part of a young student's existence must always be sufficient to create—the doubts and fears which must at times overcloud and darken the brightest intellect that ever expanded before the influence of exertion—the watching and tossing of over-excitement—the self-reproach of languor—the tightening of the heart strings—and the blank wanderings of the brain—these things are enough to complete the gloomy fore-ground of a picture which would indeed require radiance in the distance to give it any measure of captivation. And yet these things are not more, unless books and men alike deceive us, than are actually operating at this moment in the persons of a very great proportion of the young men whom I have seen at work in the class-rooms of Brown and Playfair. Truly, I think there was too much of lightness in the remarks I made to you, a few days ago, concerning the first impressions of their external appearance and demeanour.

The worst view of the subject, however, still remains to be given. To what end does all this exertion—this noble and heroic exertion, lead? That is a question which nothing can hinder

from crossing us every now and then, in the midst of all our most enthusiastic admiration. It is one which it is perhaps a wrong thing to attempt answering in any way; and I much fear it is one which will not admit of being answered in a satisfactory manner, either by you or by me. There are few splendid rewards of worldly honour held up before the eyes of the Scottish student. The same circumstances which enable him to aspire, enable hundreds and thousands to do as much as he does; and the hope of obtaining any of the few prizes which do exist, is divided among so many, that no man would venture to count his own individual chance as worthy of much consideration. The style of education and exertion to which he submits are admirably fitted for sharpening and quickening the keenness of his understanding, but do not much tend to fill his mind with a store of thoughts, feelings, and images, on which it might repose itself, and in which he might possess for ever the means of a quiet and contemplative happiness. He is made a keen doubter, and a keen disputer; and in both of these qualities there is no doubt he will at first have pleasure. But in neither is he furnished with the elements of such pleasure as may endure with him, and increase with him

throughout a laborious, and, above all, it may be, a solitary life. He is not provided with such an armoury of recollections as that which the scholar (properly so called) presents against the pressure of corporeal and mental evils.

Without much prospect, then, of any great increase of worldly goods, and without procuring to himself any very valuable stronghold of peaceful meditation, the Scottish student submits to a life of such penury and difficulty, as would almost be sufficient to counterbalance the possession even of the advantages which he has *not*. At the end of his academical career, he probably finds himself either a burden upon his relations, or providing for himself by the discharge of some duties, which might have been as well discharged without so expensive a preparation. Is it worth while to bear so much, in order to have a chance of gaining so little? As Mr Macleod says in Miss Edgeworth's novel,—"It may be doubted;" and yet perhaps it cannot be doubted without somewhat of a sin against the higher parts of our nature. But such sins we all commit often enough, both consciously and unconsciously.

P. M.

LETTER XVII.

TO THE SAME.

I REGARD, then, the academical institutions of England and Scotland, as things specifically distinct, both in their structure and in their effects. The Universities, here, educate, in proportion to the size and wealth of the two countries, twenty times a larger number than ours in England educate. They educate these persons in a very different way, and for totally different purposes—in reality at least, if not in profession. They diffuse over every part of the kingdom, and over many parts of the neighbouring kingdoms, a mighty population of men, who have received a kind and measure of education which fits them for taking a keen and active management in the affairs of ordinary life. But they seldom send forth men who are so thoroughly accomplished in any one branch of learning, as

to be likely to possess, through that alone, the means of attaining to eminence; and, what is worse, the course of the studies which have been pursued under their direction, has been so irregular and multifarious, that it is a great chance whether any one branch of occupation may have made such a powerful and commanding impression on the imagination of the student, as might induce him afterwards to perfect and complete for himself what the University can only be said to have begun.

In England, the object of the Universities is not, at present, at all of this kind. In order to prepare men for discharging the duties of ordinary life, or even for discharging the duties of professions requiring more education than is quite common in any country, it is not thought necessary that the University should ever be resorted to. Those great and venerable institutions have both existed from the very commencement of the English monarchy, and have been gradually strengthened and enriched into their present condition, by the piety and the munificence of many successive generations of kings and nobles. They are frequented by those only, who may be called upon at some future period to discharge the most sacred and most elevated duties

of English citizenship; and the magnificence of the establishments themselves carries down a portion of its spirit into the humblest individual who connects himself with them. The student is lodged in a palace; and when he walks abroad, his eyes are fed on every side with the most splendid assemblages of architectural pomp and majesty which our island can display. He dines in a hall whose lofty compartments are occupied with the portraitures of illustrious men, who of old underwent the same discipline in which he is now engaged, amidst the same appropriate and impressive accompaniments of scene and observance. He studies in his closet the same books which have, for a thousand years, formed the foundation of the intellectual character of Englishmen. In the same chapel wherein the great and good men of England were wont to assemble, he listens, every evening and every morning, to the same sublime music and sublimer words, by which their devotion was kindled, and their faith sustained. He walks under the shadow of the same elms, plantains, and sycamores, beneath whose branches the thoughtful steps of Newton, Bacon, Locke, Milton, have sounded. These old oaks, which can no longer give shade or shelter, but which still present their bare and

gnarled limbs to the elements around him—they were the contemporaries of Alfred. Here the memories of kings and heroes, and saints and martyrs, are mingled for ever with those of poets and philosophers; and the spirit of the Place walks visible, shedding all around one calm and lofty influence, alike refreshing to the affections and to the intellect—an influence which blends together, in indissoluble union, all the finest elements of patriotism, and loyalty, and religion.

That the practical usefulness of these institutions would be in any respect improved by any considerable change in their course of studies, I am far from believing; even were I certain that it would be so, I should still be very far from wishing to see such a change adopted. I am satisfied abundantly that they should continue as they are; and, not having much faith in the new doctrine of the perfectibility of human nature, I doubt whether, let them be altered as they might, the men of their production would be much altered for the better. I do not think that at our time of day in national existence, it is at all wise or desirable to begin learning new fashions. The world is not in its infancy: And where is the nation the world has produced, which can present

a more glorious array of great and holy names than ours? To me this is a sufficient proof, that we have not all the while been stumbling in the dark, without the rays of the true lamp to enlighten us in our progress. The steady and enduring radiance of our national Past, cannot be the mere delusion of our self-love; for even the voice of our enemies is for ever lifted up in its praise. What future times may judge of the Present, and what our national Future may be, it is a little out of our power to decide. But I, for my part, have no fear that they who peruse in distant years the records of this age, will reproach us with having been a degenerate people. Neither do I expect that at any future period the national character can be greatly changed, without, at the same time, being greatly degenerate.

Even in regard to many of those peculiarities of our system, which are the most easy and the most favoured marks of the wit of its enemies, I am persuaded that a compliance with what at first sight seems to be the most liberal spirit, would, in the end, be found productive of any thing but fortunate effects. It is very easy, for example, to stigmatize the rules which exclude, from more or less of our privileges, all who are

not members of our national church, with the names of bigotry, intolerance, and superstition. It should be remembered, however, that these regulations were the work of men, whom even our bitterest revilers would not dare to insult with such language; and till we see some good reason to be ashamed of them, we may be pardoned, at least, if we refuse to be entirely ashamed of their work. If it be fitting that we should have a National Church, I think it is equally fitting that the church should have the National Universities. These do not profess to monopolize all the means of instruction; the number of great names, in all departments, which have grown up without their sphere of protection, would be more than enough to give such pretensions the lie, were they so audacious as to set them forth. But they profess to educate a certain number of persons, of a certain class, in a certain set of principles, which have been connected with that class throughout all the best years of our history—and which, through the persons of that class in former times, have become identified with our national existence, and must every where be recognized as entering largely and powerfully into the formation of our national character. In a word, they are designed

to keep up the race of English gentlemen, imbued with those thoughts and feelings, with that illumination and that belief, which, as exemplified both in the words and in the actions of preceding years, have rendered the name which they bear second to none, perhaps superior to any, which the world has ever witnessed.

Instead then of joining in with that senseless spirit of railing, wherewith Scotchmen are too often accustomed to talk of the English, and Englishmen of the Scottish Universities, I please myself in thinking that the two institutions have different objects, and that they are both excellent in their different ways. That each system might borrow something with advantage from the other, is very possible, but I respect both of them too much to be fond of hasty and rash experiments. In our great empire we have need of many kinds of men; it is necessary that we should possess within our own bounds, the means of giving to each kind that sort of preparation which may best fit them for the life to which they are destined. So there be no want of unity in the general character and feeling of the whole nation, considered as acting together, the more ways the intellect of the nation has, in which to shoot itself out and display its energies, the better will

it be:—the greater the variety of walks of exertion and species of success, the greater the variety of stimulus applied; and the greater that spirit of universal activity, without which minds become stagnant like fish-pools, the greater is our hope of long and proudly preserving our high place in the estimation of the world.

I shall return to the Universities in my next.

P. M.

LETTER XVIII.

TO LADY JOHNES.

Dear Aunt,

If you meet with Mr David Williams of Ystradmeiric, he will tell you that I send him a long letter every other day, filled with histories of dinner-parties, and sketches of the Edinburgh literati; and yet, such is my diligence in my vocation of tourist, I am laying up stores of anecdotes about the northern beau-monde, and making drawings in crayon of the northern beauties, which, I flatter myself, will be enough to amuse your ladyship half the autumn, after I return to you. There is a very old rule, to do like the Romans when you are in Rome; and the only merit I lay claim to on the present occasion, resolves itself into a rigid observance of this sage precept. It is the fashion here for every man to lead two or three different kinds

of lives all at once, and I have made shift to do somewhat like my neighbours. In London, a lawyer is a lawyer, and he is nothing more; for going to the play or the House of Commons, now and then, can scarcely be considered as any serious interruption of his professional habits and existence. In London, in like manner, a gay man is nothing but a gay man; for, however he may attempt to disguise the matter, whatever he does out of the world of gayety is intended only to increase his consequence in it. But here I am living in a city, which thrives both by law and by gayeties, and—would you believe it?—a very great share of the practice of both of these mysteries lies in the very same hands. It is this, so far as I can judge, which constitutes what the logicians would call the differential quality of the society of Edinburgh. It is, at this time of the year at least, a kind of melange of London, Bath, and Cheltenham; and I am inclined to think, that, upon due examination, you would find it to be in several particulars a more agreeable place than any of these. In many other particulars, I think any rational person would pronounce it, without difficulty, to be more absurd than any of them.

The removal of the residence of the sovereign

has had the effect of rendering the great nobility of Scotland very indifferent about the capital. There is scarcely one of the *Premiere Noblesse*, I am told, that retains even the appearance of supporting a house in Edinburgh; and by far the greater part of them are quite as ignorant of it, as of any other provincial town in the island. The Scotch courts of law, however, are all established in this place, and this has been sufficient to enable Edinburgh to keep the first rank among the cities of Scotland, which, but for them, it seems extremely unlikely she should have been able to accomplish. For the more the commercial towns thrive, the more business is created for this legal one; and the lawyers of Edinburgh may be said to levy a kind of custom upon every bail of goods that is manufactured in this part of the island, and a no less regular excise upon every article of merchandize that is brought into it from abroad. In this way, (to such wonderful exactness has the matter been brought,) it may be said, that every great merchant in Glasgow pays large salaries to some two or three members of the Law in Edinburgh, who conduct the numerous litigations, that arise out of a flourishing business, with great civility; and, with greater civility still, the more numerous li-

tigations which attend the untwisting and dissevering of the Gordian knot of mercantile difficulties and embarrassments. And so, indeed, there is scarcely much exaggeration in the common saying, that every house which a man, not a lawyer, builds out of Edinburgh, enables a man, who is a lawyer, to build another equally comfortable in Edinburgh.

A very small share of the profits set apart for the nourishment of this profession falls into the hands of the first branch of it—the Barristers. These are still, in general, although not so uniformly as in former times, younger sons of good families, who have their fortunes to make, but who have been brought up in a way more calculated to make them adepts in spending than in getting. The greater part of them, moreover, seldom have any opportunity of realizing much money, were they inclined to do so; for, with the exception of some six or eight, who monopolize the whole of the large fees, and the far greater share of the small ones, the most of the advocates may think themselves extremely fortunate, if, after passing eight or ten years at the bar, they are able to make as much by their profession as may suffice for the support of a fa-

mily, in the most quiet and moderate style of living. A vast number of those who come to the bar have no chance, almost no hope, of getting into any tolerable practice; but as there are a great number of offices of various degrees of honour and emolument, which can only be filled by members of the Faculty of Advocates, they are contented to wear the gown year after year, in the expectation of at last being able to step into the possession of one of these births, by means of some connexions of blood, or marriage, or patronage. One should at first sight say, that this must be rather a heartless kind of drudgery; but, such as it is, it is submitted to by a very great number of well-educated and accomplished gentlemen, who not only keep each other in countenance with the rest of the world, but, what is much better, render this mode of life highly agreeable in itself. These persons constitute the chief community of loungers and talkers in Edinburgh; and such is the natural effect of their own family connexions, and the conventional kind of respect accorded to the name of their profession, that their influence may be considered as extending over almost the whole of the northern part of the island. They make the nearest ap-

proach, of any class of men now existing, to the modes of Templar-life described by Addison and Steele; for, as to the Temple wits and critics of our day, you know they are now sadly "shorn of their beams," and are, indeed, regarded by the ruling powers of the West-end—the οἱ ἐν πελει of Albemarle-street, &c.—as forming little better than a sort of upper form of the Cockney-school.

The chief wealth of the profession, however, if not the chief honour, is lodged with the attornies, or, as they are here called, the Writers. Of these there is such an abundance in this city, that I cannot for my life understand by what means they all contrive to live; and those of them with whom I have become acquainted, I do assure you live well. They are sub-divided into various classes, of which the highest is that of the Writers or Clerks to the Signet, so called because they alone have the privilege of drawing particular kinds of deeds, to which the king's signet is affixed. Even of these there are many hundreds in actual practice at this moment, and many of them have realized large fortunes, and retired from business to enjoy the *otium cum dignitate*. It may be said, that almost every foot of land in Scotland pays something to the Wri-

ters to the Signet; for there is scarcely an estate in Scotland, the proprietor of which does not entrust the management of the whole of his affairs to one of their order. The connexion which exists between them and the landed interest is thus of the most intimate nature. The country gentlemen of Scotland, from whatever causes, are generally very much in debt. Their writers, or, as they call them, their agents or *doers*, are of necessity acquainted with the many secrets which men in debt must have; they are themselves the bankers and creditors of their clients. In short, when a gentleman changes his *man of business*, his whole affairs must undergo a complete revolution and convulsion; and in Scotland, it is a much easier thing to get rid of one's wife, than of one's *doer*.

These advocates and rich writers may be considered as forming the *nucleus* of the society of Edinburgh. Their connexions of birth and business bind them so closely with the landed gentry, that these last come to Edinburgh principally in order to be in their neighbourhood; these again draw with them a part of the *minor noblesse*, and the whole of the idle military men who can afford it. Of late years also, the gentry

of some of the northern English counties have begun to come hither, in preference to going to York as they used to do; and out of all this medley of materials, the actual mass of the society of Edinburgh is formed. I mean the winter society of Edinburgh; for, in the summer months—that is from April till Christmas—the town is commonly deserted by all, except those who have ties of real business to connect them with it. Nay, during a considerable portion of that time, it loses, as I am informed, the greater part even of its eminent lawyers, and has quite as green and desolate an appearance, as the fashionable squares in London have about the falling of the leaf.

The medley of people, thus brought together for a few months every year to inhabit a few streets in this city, cannot afford to split their forces very minutely, so as to form many different spheres of society, according to their opinions of their relative rank and importance. It is now admitted everywhere, that no party is worth the going to unless it be a crowded one; now, it is not possible to form a party here that shall be at once select and crowded. The dough and the leaven must go together to make up the loaf,

and the wives of lords and lairds, and advocates, and writers, must be contented to club their forces, if they are to produce any thing that deserves the honourable name of *a squeeze*. Now and then, indeed, a person of the very highest importance, may by great exertion succeed in forming one exception to this rule. But the rule is in general a safe one; and the Edinburgh parties are in the main mixed parties—I do not mean that they are mixed in a way that renders them at all disagreeable, even to those who have been accustomed to the style of society in much greater capitals, but that they are mixed in a way of which no example is to be found in the parties of London, or indeed of any European capital, except the Paris of the present time. People visit each other in Edinburgh with all the appearance of cordial familiarity, who, if they lived in London, would imagine their difference of rank to form an impassable barrier against such intercourse. Now, although the effect may not amount to any thing absolutely unpleasant, there is no question that this admission of persons not educated in the true circles, must be seen and felt upon the general aspect of the society of Edinburgh, and that, up-

on the whole, this society is, in consequence of their admission, less elegant than might otherwise have been expected in the capital of such a country as Scotland. * * * *

Your's very affectionately,

P. M.

LETTER XIX.

TO THE SAME.

Dear Aunt,

However composed and arranged, the routs and balls of this place are, during their season, piled upon each other with quite as much bustle and pomp as those even of London. Every night, some half a dozen ladies are *at home*, and every thing that is in the wheel of fashion, is carried round, and thrown out in due course at the door of each of them. There is at least one regular ball every evening, and besides this, half of the routs are in their waning hours transformed into carpet-dances, wherein quadrilles are performed in a very penseroso method to the music of the piano-forte. Upon the whole, however, I am inclined to be of opinion, that even those who most assiduously frequent these miscellaneous assemblages are soon sickened, if they

durst but confess the truth, of the eternal repetition of the same identical crowd displaying its noise and pressure under so many different roofs. Far be it from me to suspect, that there are not some faces, of which no eye can grow weary; but, in spite of all their loveliness, I am certainly of opinion, that the impression made by the belles of Edinburgh would be more powerful, were it less frequently reiterated. Among the hundred young ladies, whose faces are exhibited in these parties, a very small proportion, of course, can have any claims to that higher kind of beauty, which, like the beauty of painting or sculpture, must be gazed on for months or years before the whole of its charm is understood and felt as it ought to be. To see every evening, for months in succession, the same merely pretty, or merely pleasing faces, is at the best a fatiguing business. One must soon become as familiar with the contour of every cheek, and the sweep of every ringlet, as one is with the beauties or defects of one's own near relatives. And if it be true, that defects in this way come to be less disagreeable, it is no less true, *per contra*, that beauties come to have less of the natural power of their fascination.

The effects of this unceasing flood of gayety,

then, are not perhaps so very favourable as might be expected to the great object of all gayeties—the entrapping of the unfortunate lords of the creation. But this is not the worst of the matter. I am really very free from any very puritanical notions, in regard to the pleasures of human life; but I do sincerely, and in honest earnestness doubt, whether any good is gained to the respectable citizens of this town, by having their wives and daughters immersed, for so considerable a portion of the year, in a perpetual round of amusements, so fatiguing to their bodies and their minds, and so destructive, I should fear, of much of that quiet and innocent love of home and simple pleasures, in which the true charm of the female character ought to consist, and in which its only true charm does at this moment consist in the opinion of all men of sense and feeling. It is a very pretty thing, no doubt, to see a young lady dressed with Parisian flowers and Parisian gauzes, and silk slippers and an Indian fan, and the whole &c. of fashionable array: But I question whether this be, after all, the style in which a young man of any understanding sees a young lady with most danger to his peace. It is very well that people in the more quiet walks of life should not be ignorant of what

goes on among those that are pleased to style themselves their betters: But, I do think that this is rather too entire and *bona fide* an initiation into a train of existence, which is, luckily, as inconsistent with the permanent happiness, as it is with the permanent duties, of those who cannot afford all their lives to be mere fine ladies.

For myself, after living so quietly in Cardigan, I have been on the whole much pleased with the full and leisurely view I have now had even of this out-skirt of the beau-monde. I do not think matters have undergone any improvement since I last peeped into its precincts. The ladies are undoubtedly by no means so well-dressed as they were a few years ago, before these short waists and enormous *tetes* of flowers and ringlets were introduced from Paris.—There is, perhaps, no one line in the whole of the female form, in which there lies so much gracefulness as in the outline of the back. Now, that was seen as it ought to be a few years ago; but now, every woman in Britain looks as if her clothes were hung about her neck by a peg. And then the truly Spartan exposure of the leg, which seems now to be in fashion, is, in my judgment, the most unwise thing in the whole world; for any person can tell well enough from the shape of the

foot and ancle, whether the limb be or be not handsome; and what more would the ladies have? Moreover, the fashion has not been allowed to obtain its ascendency without evident detriment to the interests of the majority, for I have never yet been in any place where there were not more limbs that would gain by being concealed, than by being exposed. But, in truth, even those who have the shape of a Diana, may be assured that they are not, in the main, gainers by attracting too much attention to some of their beauties. —I wonder that they do not recollect and profit by the exquisite description of the Bride, in Sir John Suckling's poem of the Wedding ; ——

> " Her feet beneath her petticoat,
> Like little mice stole in and out,
> As if they fear'd the light."

As for those, who, with bad shapes, make an useless display of their legs, I must own, I have no excuse for their folly. I know well enough, that it is a very difficult thing to form any proper opinion about one's own *face;* because it is universally admitted that faces, which have no regularity of feature, may often be far more charming than those which have, and, of course,

those who are sensible enough to perceive, that their heads could not stand the test of sculpture, may be very easily pardoned for believing, that their expressiveness might still render them admirable studies for a painter. But as to limbs,—I really am quite at a loss to conceive how any person should labour under the least difficulty in ascertaining, in the most exact way, whether handsomeness may, or may not, be predicated concerning any given pair of legs or arms in existence. Their beauty is entirely that of Form, and by looking over a few books of prints, or a few plaster-of-Paris casts, the dullest eye in the world may learn, in the course of a single forenoon, to be almost as good a critic in calves and ancles as Canova himself. Yet nothing can be more evident, than that the great majority of young ladies are most entirely devoid of any ideas concerning the beauty of Form, either in themselves or in others: they never take the trouble to examine any such matters minutely, but satisfy themselves with judging by the general air and result. In regard to other people, this may do very well; but it is a very bad plan with respect to themselves.

Even you, my dear lady Johnes, are a perfect tyro in this branch of knowledge. I remember,

only the last time I saw you, you were praising with all your might the legs of Colonel B——, those flimsy worthless things, that look as if they were bandaged with linen rollers from the heel to the knee. I beg you would look at the Apollo Belvidere, the Fighting Gladiator, and the Farnese Hercules. There are only three handsome kinds of legs in the world, and in these, you have a specimen of each of the three —I speak of gentlemen. As for your own sex, the Venus is the only true model of female form in existence, and yet such is your culpable ignorance of yourselves, that I devoutly believe she would be pronounced a very clumsy person, were she to come into the Aberystwith ball-room. You may say what you will, but I still assert, and I will prove it if you please, by pen and pencil, that, with one pair of exceptions, the best legs in Cardigan are Mrs P——'s. As for Miss J—— D——'s, I think they are frightful.

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† A great part of this letter is omitted in the Second Edition, in consequence of the displeasure its publication gave to certain individuals in Cardiganshire. I hope I need not say how much I was grieved, when I learned in what way some of the passages had been regarded by several ladies, who have

It is a great mistake under which the Scotch people lie, in supposing themselves to be excellent dancers; and yet one hears the mistake re-echoed by the most sensible, sedate, and dance-abhorring Presbyterians one meets with. If the test of good dancing were activity, there is indeed no question, the northern beaux and belles might justly claim the pre-eminence over their brethren and sisters of the south. In an Edinburgh ball-room, there appears to be the same pride of bustle, the same glorying in muscular agitation and alertness—the same "*sudor immanis*," to use the poet's phrase, which used of old to distinguish the sports of the Circus or the Campus Martius. But this is all;—the want of grace is as conspicuous in their performances, as the abundance of vigour. We desiderate the conscious towerlike poise—the easy, slow, unfatiguing glide of the fair pupils of D'Estainville. To say the truth, the ladies in Scotland dance in

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not a more sincere admirer than myself. As for the gentleman, who chose to take what I said of him in so much dudgeon, he will observe, that I have allowed what I said to remain exactly *in statu quo*, which I certainly should not have done had he expressed his displeasure in a more rational manner.

P. M.

common pretty much like our country lasses at a harvest-home. They kick and pant as if the devil were in them; and when they are young and pretty, it is undoubtedly no disagreeable thing to be a spectator of their athletic display; but I think they are very ignorant of dancing as a science. Comparatively few of them manage their feet well, and of these few what a very insignificant portion know any thing about that equally important part of the art—the management of the arms. And then how absurdly they thrust out their shoulder blades! How they neglect the undulation of the back! One may compare them to fine masses of silver, the little awkward workmanship bestowed on which rather takes from than adds to the natural beauty of the materials. As for the gentlemen, *they* seldom display even vigour and animation, unless they be half-cut—and they never display any thing else.

It is fair, however, to mention, that in the true indigenous dances of the country, above all in the reel (the few times I have seen it), these defects seem in a great measure to vanish, so that ambition and affectation are after all at the bottom of their bad dancing in the present day, as well as of their bad writing. The quadrille, notwithstand-

ing, begins to take with the soil, and the girls can already go through most of its manœuvres without having recourse to their fans. But their beaux continue certainly to perform these new-fangled evolutions, in a way that would move the utmost spleen of a Parisian butcher. What big, lazy, clumsy fellows one sees lumbering cautiously, on toes that should not be called light and fantastic, but rather heavy and syllogistic. It seems that there goes a vast deal of ratiocination to decide upon the moves of their game. The automaton does not play chess with such an air of lugubrious gravity. Of a surety, Terpsichore was never before worshipped by such a solemn set of devotees. One of our own gloomy Welsh Jumpers, could he be suddenly transported among some *sets* that I have seen, would undoubtedly imagine himself to be in a saltatory prayer-meeting; and yet these good people, put them fairly into a reel, can frisk it about with all possible demonstrations of hilarity. They prefer the quadrille, I imagine, upon something of the same principle which leads a maid-servant to spend her two shillings on a tragedy rather than on a comedy. I could not help in my own mind likening these dolorous *pas seuls* performed in rotation by each of the quadrillers, and then suc-

ceeded by the more clamorous display of sadness in their *chaine Angloise, &c.* to the account which Miss Edgeworth gives us of the Irish *lyke wake*, wherein each of the cousins chants a stave of lamentation, *solo*, and then the whole generation of them join in the screaming treble of the choral *ulululuh! hu!* "Why did you leave the potatoes?" "What ailed thee, Pat, with the butter-milk!" &c. &c. &c.

The *waltz* has been even more unfortunate than the quadrille; it is still entirely an exotic in the North. Nor, in truth, am I much inclined to find fault with the prejudices which have checked the progress of this fascinating dance among the disciples of John Knox and Andrew Melville. I really am of opinion, that it might have been as well, had we of the South been equally shy of the importation.

As for myself, I assure you, that ever since I spent a week at Lady L——'s, and saw those great fat girls of her's waltzing every night with that odious Dr B——, I cannot endure the very name of the thing. By the way, I met the other day with a very nice poem, entitled, "Waltz—an Apostrophic Hymn, by Francis Hornem, Esq.; and as I think you have never

seen it, I shall transcribe a few lines for your amusement.

" Borne on the breath of Hyperborean gales,
From Hamburgh's port (while Hamburgh yet had *Mails)*
Ere yet unlucky Fame—compelled to creep
To snowy Gottenburgh—was chilled to sleep;
Or, starting from her slumbers, deigned arise,
Heligoland! to stock thy mart with lies;
While unburnt Moscow yet had news to send,
Nor owed her fiery exit to a friend,
She came—Waltz came—and with her certain sets
Of true despatches, and as true Gazettes;
Then flamed of Austerlitz the blest despatch,
Which Moniteur nor Morning Post can match;
And—almost crushed beneath the glorious news,
Ten plays—and forty tales of Kotzebue's;
One envoy's letters, six composers' airs,
And loads from Frankfort and from Leipsig fairs;
Meiner's four volumes upon womankind,
Like Lapland witches to ensure a wind;
Brunk's heaviest tome for ballast, and, to back it,
Of Heynê, such as should not sink the packet.

" Fraught with this cargo—and her fairest freight,
Delightful Waltz, on tiptoe for a mate,
The welcome vessel reached the genial strand,
And round her flocked the daughters of the land.

* * * * * *

Not lovelorn Quixote—when his Sancho thought
The knight's fandango friskier than it ought;
Not soft Herodias, when, with winning tread,
Her nimble feet danced off another's head;
Not Cleopatra on her galley's deck,
Displayed so much of *leg*, or more of *neck*,
Than thou, ambrosial Waltz, when first the moon
Beheld thee twirling to a Saxon tune!

"To you—ye husbands of ten years! whose brows
Ache with the annual tributes of a spouse;
To you, of nine years less—who only bear
The budding sprouts of those that you *shall* wear,
With added ornaments around them rolled,
Of native brass, or law-awarded gold;
To you—ye matrons, ever on the watch
To mar a son's, or make a daughter's match;
To you—ye children of—whom chance accords,
Always the ladies' and *sometimes* their lords';
To you—ye single gentlemen! who seek
Torments for life, or pleasures for a week;
As Love or Hymen your endeavours guide,
To gain your own, or snatch another's bride;
To one and all the lovely stranger came,
And every ball-room echoes with her name.

"Endearing Waltz—to thy more melting tune
Bow Irish jig—and ancient rigadoon;
Scotch reels avaunt!—and country dance forego
Your future claims to each fantastic toe;

Waltz—Waltz—alone both arms and legs demands,
Liberal of feet—and lavish of her hands;
Hands which may freely range in public sight,
Where ne'er before—but—pray 'put out the light.'
Methinks the glare of yonder chandelier
Shines much too far—or I am much too near;
And true, though strange—Waltz whispers this remark,
'My slippery steps are safest in the dark.'
But here the muse with due decorum halts,
And lends her longest petticoat to 'Waltz.'

"Observant travellers! of every time,
Ye quartos! published upon every clime;
O say, shall dull Romaika's heavy round,
Fandango's wriggle, or Bolero's bound;
Can Egypt's Almas—tantalizing groupe—
Columbia's caperers to the warlike whoop—
Can aught, from cold Kamschatka to Cape Horn,
With Waltz compare, or after Waltz be borne?
Ah no! from Morier's pages up to Galt's,
Each tourist pens a paragraph for 'Waltz.'

"Shades of those belles, whose reign began of yore
With George the Third's—and ended long before;
Though in your daughters' daughters yet you thrive,
Burst from your lead, and be yourselves alive!
Back to the ball-room speed your spectred host,
Fools' paradise is dull to that you lost;
No treacherous powder bids Conjecture quake,
No stiff-starched stays make meddling fingers ache;
(Transferred to those ambiguous things that ape

Goats in their visage, women in their shape ;)
No damsel faints when rather closely pressed,
But more caressing seems when most caressed ;
Superfluous hartshorn and reviving salts,
Both banished by the sovereign cordial ' Waltz.'

* * * * * *

Though gentle Genlis, in her strife with Staël,
Would e'en proscribe thee from a Paris ball ;
Thee Fashion hails—from Countesses to Queens,
And maids and valets waltz behind the scenes ;
Wide and more wide thy witching circle spreads,
And turns—if nothing else—at least our heads ;
With thee e'en clumsy cits attempt to bounce,
And cockneys practise what they can't pronounce.
Gods ! how the glorious theme my strain exalts,
And rhyme finds partner rhyme in praise of ' Waltz.' "

And now, my dear aunt, I have surely written to you, at the least, with most dutiful fulness.

P. M.

LETTER XX.

TO THE REV. DAVID WILLIAMS.

DEAR WILLIAMS,

THE life I have led here has been such a strange mixture of all sorts of occupations, that were I to send you a literal diary of my transactions, I believe you would not fail to discover abundant room for doubting the authenticity of the M.S. I shall therefore reserve the full and entire history of this part of my existence, till I may have opportunity of communicating it to you *viva voce* over a bottle of Binn D, and proceed in the meantime, as I have been doing, to give you little glimpses and fragments of it, exactly in the order that pleases to suggest itself.

In Smollet's time, according to the inimitable and unquestionable authority of our cousin, Matthew Bramble, no stranger could sleep more than a single night in Edinburgh, with the preservation of any thing like an effectual incognito. In those days, as I have already told you, the people all inhabited in the Old Town of

Edinburgh—packed together, family above family, for aught I know clan above clan, in little more than one street, the houses of which may, upon an average, be some dozen stories in height. The aerial elevation, at which an immense proportion of these people had fixed their abodes, rendered it a matter of no trifling moment to ascend to them; and a person in the least degree affected with asthma, might as soon have thought of mounting the Jungfrau, as of paying regular devoirs to any of the fair cynosures of these ὑπερτατα δωματα. The difficulty of access, which thus prevented many from undertaking any ascents of the kind, was sufficient to prevent all those who did undertake them, from entering rashly on their pilgrimages. No man thought of mounting one of those gigantic staircases, without previously ascertaining that the object of his intended visit was at home—unless it might be some Hannibal fresh from the Highlands, and accustomed, from his youth upwards, to dance all his minuets on Argyle's bowling-green. To seek out a stranger among a hundred or two such staircases, was of course an undertaking beyond the patience even of a person who had enjoyed such an education as this; and so it became a matter of absolute necessity, that Edin-

burgh should possess some body of citizens set apart, and destined *ab ovo*, for climbing staircases, and carrying messages.

From this necessity, sprung the high lineage of "the Cadies of Auld Reekie." When I use the word lineage, I do not mean to say that their trade ran in their blood, or that the cadies, as the Lake poet sings,

> "To sire from grandsire, and from sire to son,
> Throughout their generations, did pursue
> With purpose, and hereditary love,
> Most stedfast and unwavering, the same course
> Of labour, not unpleasant, nor unpaid."

The cadies bore more resemblance in this respect to the Janissaries and Mamelukes of Modern, than to the hereditary hammermen, cooks, physicians, and priests of Ancient Egypt. The breed of them was not kept up in the usual way,

> "By ordinance of matrimonial love;"

but by continual levies of fresh recruits from the same rugged wilds, wherein alone, the *Genus Iapeti* was supposed to retain sufficient vigour for the production of individuals, adapted for so aspiring a course of life. Every year brought from the fastnesses of Lochaber and Braemar, a new supply of scions to be engrafted upon the stock rooted immoveably in the heart

of Auld Reekie—so that season after season, the tree of the cadies, like that of Virgil, might be said,

> " Mirari novas frondes et non sua poma."

However produced and sustained—whatever might be the beauties or the blemishes of their pedigree—this race continued for many generations, to perform with the same zeal and success the same large variety of good offices to the citizens of Edinburgh. The cadie preserved, amidst all his functions, not a little of the air and aspect natural to him in his own paternal wildernesses :

> " A savage wildness round him hung,
> As of a dweller out of doors ;
> In his whole figure and his mien
> A savage character was seen,
> Of mountains and of dreary moors."

He climbed staircases with the same light and elastic spring which had been wont to carry him unfatigued to the brow of Cairngorm or Ben-Nevis ; and he executed the commands of his employer *pro tempore*, whatever they might be, in the same spirit of unquestioning submission and thorough-going zeal, with which he had been taught from his infancy to obey the orders of Maccallamore, Glengary, Gordon, Grant, or whoso-

ever the chieftain of his clan might be. In order to qualify him for the exercise of this laborious profession, it was necessary that the apprentice-cadie should make himself minutely familiar with every staircase, every house, every family, and every individual in the city, and to one who had laid in this way a sound and accurate foundation of information, it could be no difficult matter to keep on a level with the slight flood of mutation, which the city and its population was at that period accustomed to. The moment a stranger arrived in Edinburgh, his face was sure to attract the observation of some of this indefatigable tribe, and they knew no rest till they had ascertained his name, residence, and condition—considering it, indeed, as a sort of insult upon their body, that any man should presume to live within the bounds of their jurisdiction, and yet remain unpenetrated by the perspicacity of their unwearied *espionage*. But why should I say any more of this race?—They are now gathered to their fathers; and their deeds, are they not written in the Book of the Expedition of Humphrey Clinker?

Although, however, the original and regular fraternity no longer exists, and although, indeed, the change which has taken place, both in

the residence and in the manners of the inhabitants, has removed almost all shadow of pretence for the existence of any such fraternity—Edinburgh is still possessed of a species of men who retain the name, and, in so far as the times permit, the functions of the cadies. At the corner of every street is usually to be seen a knot of these fellows lounging on a wooden bench in expectation of employment. They are very busy in the evenings during the gay season of the year; for they are exclusively the bearers of the chairs which convey the beaux and belles from one rout and ball to another; but, even at that season, their mornings, for the most part, are passed in a state of complete inaction. A pack of sorely blackened cards, or an old rotten backgammon board, furnishes a small proportion with something like occupation; but the greater part are contented with an indefatigable diligence in the use of tobacco, which they seem to consume indifferently in all its shapes,—smoking, chewing, and snuffing, with apparently the same intensity of satisfaction. Whenever I pass one of these groupes, my ears are saluted with accents, which the persons I usually walk with talk of as coarse and disgusting, but which are interesting at least, if not delightful, to me, be-

cause they remind me most strongly of those of our own native dialect. At first, indeed, the only resemblance I was sensible to, lay in the general music and rythm of their speech; but, by dint of listening attentively on all occasions, I soon began to pick up a few of their words, and am now able, I flatter myself, to understand a great part of their discourse. With a few varieties in the inflections, and some more striking variations in the vowel sounds, the Gaelic is evidently the same language with our own. I do not mean merely, that it is sprung remotely from the same Celtic stem; but that it is entirely of the same structure in all essential respects, and bears, so far as I can judge, a much nearer resemblance to our tongue, than is any where else to be traced between the languages of peoples that have lived so long asunder. I shall pay particular attention to this subject during my stay in Scotland, and doubt not I shall be able to give you some very interesting details when we meet. In the mean time, I have already begun to read a little of the Gaelic Ossian, not you may believe out of any reverence for its authenticity, but with a view to see what the written Gaelic is. Nothing can be more evi-

dent than its total inferiority to the Welsh. It is vastly inferior in perspicuity, and immeasurably inferior in melody; in short, it bears no marks of having undergone, as our language has done, the correcting, condensing, and polishing labour of a set of great poets and historians. These defects are still more apparent in a collection of Gaelic songs which I have seen, and which I believe to be really antique. The wild and empassioned tone of sentiment, however, and the cold melancholy imagery of these compositions, render them well worthy of being translated; and, indeed, Walter Scott has already done this service for some of the best of them. But I have seen nothing that should entitle them to share in any thing like the high and devout admiration which we justly give, and which all Europe would give, had they the opportunity, to the sublime and pathetic masterpieces of our own great bards. I trust, David, you are not neglecting your truly grand and important undertaking. Go on, and prosper; and I doubt not, you will confer the * highest honour both on your country and yourself.

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* This refers to a great work on Welsh Poetry and History, in which Mr Williams has been engaged for some years, and

The cadies, from whom I have made this digression, have furnished me with another, and almost as interesting field of study, in quite a different way. Their physiognomies are to me an inexhaustible fund of observation and entertainment. They are for the most part, as I have said, Highlanders by birth, but the experience of their Lowland lives has had the merit of tempering, in a very wonderful manner, the mere mountaineer parts of their aspect. A kind of wild stare, which the eyes retain from the keen and bracing atmosphere of their native glens, is softened with an infusion of quiet urban shrewdness, often productive of a most diverting inconsistency in the general effect of their countenances. I should certainly have supposed them, *prima facie*, to be the most unprincipled set of men in the world; but I am told their character for honesty, fidelity, and discretion, is such as to justify the most implicit reliance in them. This, however, I by no means take as a complete proof of my being in the wrong. Honesty, fidelity, and discretion, are necessary to their em-

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which, when it is published, will, I doubt not, create a greater sensation in Wales, than any thing that has occurred since the death of Llewellyn.

ployment, and success; and therefore I doubt not they are honest, faithful, and discreet, in all their dealings with their employers. But I think it is not possible for fellows, with such faces as these, to have any idea of moral obligation, beyond what is inspired in this way by the immediate feeling of self-interest; and I have no doubt, that, with proper management, one might find on occasion an assassin, almost as easily as a pimp, among such a crew of grinning, smiling, cringing savages, as are at this moment assembled beneath my window. I am making a collection of drawings of all the most noted of these cadies, and I assure you, my sketch-book does not contain a richer section than this will afford. You will be quite thunderstruck to find what uniformity prevails in the developement of some of the leading organs of these topping cadies. They are almost all remarkable for projection of their eye-brows—the consequence of the luxuriant manner in which their organs of observation have expanded themselves. At the top of their heads, the symbols of ambition, and love of praise, are singularly prominent. A kind of dogged pertinacity of character may be inferred from the knotty structure of the region behind their ears; and the choleric temperament be-

trayed in their gestures, when among themselves, may probably be accounted for by the extraordinary developement of the organ of self-love, just above the nape of the neck—which circumstance again is, no doubt, somewhat connected with the continual friction of burthens upon that delicate region.

It is very ungrateful of me, however, to be saying anything disrespectful about a class of men, from whom I have derived so much advantage since my arrival in this place. Whenever a stranger does arrive, it is the custom that he enters into a kind of tacit compact with some of the body, who is to perform all little offices he may require during the continuance of his visit. I, myself, was particularly fortunate in falling into the hands of one whom I should take to be the cleverest cadie that at present treads the streets of Auld Reekie.

His name is Donald M'Nab, and, if one may take his word for it, he has gentle blood in his veins, being no less than " a bairn o' our chief himsell." Nor, indeed, do I see any reason to call this account of his pedigree in question, for Donald is broad of back, and stout of limb, and has, I think, not a little of the barbarian kind of pride about the top of his forehead; and

I hear, the Phylarchus with whom he claims kindred, led, in more respects than one, a very patriarchal sort of life.

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P. M.

LETTER XXI.

TO THE REV. DAVID WILLIAMS.

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I SPENT an afternoon very pleasantly the other day at Dr Brewster's, the same who is so celebrated for his discoveries concerning light—his many inventions of optical instruments—and his masterly conduct of that best of all works of the kind, the Edinburgh Encyclopædia. Dr Brewster is still a young man, although one would scarcely suppose this to be the case, who, never having seen himself, should form his guess from considering what he has done. He cannot, I should think, be above forty, if so much. Like most of the scientific men in Edinburgh, the doctor is quite a man of the world in his manners; his countenance is a very mild and agreeable one, and in his eyes, in particular, there is a wonderful union of penetration and tenderness of expression. From his conver-

sation, one would scarcely suspect that he had gone so deep into the hidden parts of science, for he displays a vast deal of information concerning the lighter kinds of literature, although, indeed, he does all this with a hesitative sort of manner, which probably belongs to him as a man of abstruse science. It is, no doubt, mainly owing to this happy combination of accomplishments, that he has been able to render his great work so much more truly of an Encyclopædic character, than any other which has been published under the same name in our island. In a work of that kind, which cannot be finished without the co-operation of a vast variety of contributors continued throughout many successive years, it is quite obvious how much must depend on the superintending and arranging skill and judgment of the editor. Now, it is a very rare thing indeed, to meet with a person of fine talents, who is alike a man of science, and a man of literature; and unless under the care of such a person, I do not see how an Encyclopædia can be conducted in such a way as to give equal satisfaction to both the great classes into which readers of Encyclopædias must necessarily be divided. All the other Encyclopædias published in this country have been edited either by per-

sons possessed of skill in one department only, and negligent of the rest, or, what is still worse, by persons alike destitute of skill in all departments whatever—in other words, members of the great corporation of charlatans.*

There were several very pleasant men of the party, and the conversation, both during dinner, and afterwards, was extremely lively and agreeable, as well as instructive; but from the time we sat down, there was one face which attracted my attention in a way that I was quite at a loss to account for. I experienced, in looking at it, a strange and somewhat uncomfortable sort of feeling, of which you must often have been sensible,—as if I had seen the countenance before, where, when, or how, it was impossible for me to recollect. At last, the gentleman who thus occupied my attention, happened in talking to Dr Brewster, to utter the word *Freyberg*, and the whole affair flashed across me as swift as lightning. That single sound had opened a key to the whole mystery, and a moment after, I could not help wondering how I should have been at a loss. Some years ago (I shall not say how many,)

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* I should have excepted Dr Millar, the modest and enlightened Editor of that excellent work, the Encyclopædia Edinensis.

when I was stronger, and more active than I now am, and capable of making longer excursions in ruder vehicles than I now venture upon in my shandrydan, I remember to have travelled in the common post-waggon from Dresden to Leipsig. I had gone on horseback quite through the Hartz, and passed from thence in the same manner all up the delightful banks of the Elbe, from Magdeburg to the Saxon Switzerland. I then sold my horse, (much the worse for the wear I had given him,) and was making the best of my way towards the west, in that most coarse, and most jumbling of all machines,

"The neat post-waggon trotting in."

We had got as far as within a single stage of Leipsig, when a little adventure befel us, which, till this face recalled it, I had, for years, as utterly forgotten as if it never had occurred. We were just about to enter a village, (I cannot recollect its name,) when our vehicle was surrounded by a party of mounted gens-d'armes, and a fierce looking fellow, thrusting his mustachio and his pipe into the window, commanded the whole party to come out and shew ourselves. A terrible murder, he said, had been committed some-

where by a Jew—a watchman, I think, of Kœningsberg, and he had every occasion to believe, that the murderer had left Dresden that morning in one of the post-waggons. After we had all complied with his order, and dislodged ourselves from the pillar of tobacco-smoke in which we sat enveloped, there were two of the company on whom our keeper seemed to look with eyes of peculiar suspicion. I myself was one, and the other was a thin, dark complexioned, and melancholy looking young man, whom, till this moment, I had not remarked; for of the six benches swung across the waggon, I had sate upon the one nearest the front, and he on that nearest the rear. I had allowed my beard to grow upon my upper lip, and I believe looked as swarthy as any Jew ever did; but my scanty allowance of nose would have alone satisfied a more skilful physiognomist, that I could not be the guilty man. The other had somewhat the same cast in that feature, and he wore no mustachio, but his hair seemed to be of the genuine Israelitish jet—and the gens-d'armes were positive that one or other of us must be the murderer. I spoke German with fluency, and with a pretty just accent, and made a statement for myself, which seemed to remove something

of the suspicion from me. The other delivered himself with more hesitation, and with an accent, which, whatever it might be, was evidently not Saxon, and therefore the Hussar seemed to take it for granted that it was Jewish, imperfectly concealed. At last, after a good deal of discussion, we were both taken to the Amt-house, where the magistrate of the village sat in readiness to decide on the merits of our case. The circumstances which had determined the chief suspicion of the officers, appeared to weigh in the same manner on the mind of the magistrate, and, at the end of the examination which ensued of our persons and our papers, it was announced, that I might proceed on my journey, but that the other must be contented to remain where he was, till his passport should be sent back to Dresden for the examination of the police. Upon this, my fellow-traveller lost temper, and began to complain most bitterly of the inconvenience to which such a delay would expose him. He was on his way, he said, to Freyberg, where he had already studied one year under the celebrated Werner, as his passport testified, and he had particular reasons for being anxious to reach his university before a certain day in the following week. The ma-

gistrate, who was a very mild-looking person, seemed to consider with himself for a moment, and then said, "A thought strikes me—the son of our clergyman has studied at Freyberg, and if you have really been there, sir, it is probable he may recognize you." My companion had no objections to an experiment, which at least could not place him in a worse situation than that in which he was—and in a few minutes the son of the clergyman made his appearance. I remember as distinctly as if the thing had occurred only yesterday, the expression of delight which illuminated the countenance of the accused, when this person declared that he recollected him perfectly at Freyberg, and that he had heard Professor Werner speak of him as a young Scotchman who gave infinite promise of being distinguished in the study of mineralogy. This removed every difficulty, and the magistrate, with many apologies, gave us permission to take our seats in the post-waggon. The distance of our positions in the vehicle rendered it impossible for me to exchange more than a very few words with my fellow-sufferer, after we began to move, although, having discovered him to be my countryman, I was sufficiently inclined to enter into conversation. It was late at night

before we arrived at Leipsig; and, as I remained there for a day or two, while he passed on without stopping to Freyberg, we had no further opportunity of communication. In short, I had never seen the face from that time till now; but I felt assured, that, in spite of the years which had intervened, I could not be mistaken, and here was the very gentleman at the table of Dr Brewster.

In the course of a few minutes, I heard him addressed by the name of Jameson, and immediately conjectured that he might probably be the well-known Professor of Natural History, whose System of Mineralogy you have often seen on my table. This turned out to be the case; and, after a second bottle had somewhat diminished our ceremony, I had a pleasure in recalling to him the story of the murderous Jew, and so of commencing (for it could scarcely be called renewing) an acquaintance with one from whose works I had received so much information and advantage. After the Doctor's company dispersed themselves, I walked along Prince's-Street with the Professor, and he invited me to call on him next day, and see his museum—an invitation which you, who know my propensities, will not suspect me of declining. He also offer-

ed to shew me the collection of mineralogy belonging to the University, of which I had heard a great deal. I went yesterday, and it is, undoubtedly, a very superb collection. It is of great value, and admirably arranged; and the external characters of minerals, particularly those derived from colours, are finely illustrated by an extensive series of the most valuable specimens arranged according to the system made use of by Werner.

Professor Jameson is chiefly known to the world as a mineralogist, and in this character he certainly stands entirely without a rival in his own country; and when we consider that his system of mineralogy has been adopted by a celebrated Frenchman, as the text-book to his own lectures in Paris, we may fairly conclude, from the preference shown by so competent a judge, that the knowledge and ability displayed in that work, render it at least equal to the most approved publications of the continental authors. But it is not his intimate acquaintance with mineralogy alone, which renders Mr Jameson so capable of doing honour to the chair which he holds. He is also greatly versed in zoology, and, what is of great importance in these times, seems much inclined to indulge in those more general and

philosophical views of that science, which the study of nomenclature and classification has well-nigh banished from the remembrance of most of his brethren in the south. A residence of many years in different parts of the continent, and, in particular, a perfect knowledge of the German tongue, which he acquired during his stay at Freyberg, have opened to him many sources of information, from which he continues to derive infinite advantage; and, at a time when, from the extent and multiplicity of his labours in mineralogy, one might naturally suppose his attention to be entirely engrossed by that study, his pupils, I am assured, find him on every occasion both able and willing to instruct them regarding all the recent and most important discoveries and improvements in the other branches of natural science.

The professor delivers his lectures both during the winter and summer season, and he divides his course into five great branches: Meteorology —Hydrography—Mineralogy—a Sketch of the Philosophy of Botany, sufficient to enable his pupils to understand the relations which subsist between that science and a complete history of the inorganic parts of the globe—and, lastly, Zoology. The first of these divisions is render-

MR JAMESON.

ed particularly interesting, by the number and variety of curious facts which are collected, and the more so, as there are scarcely any good books written professedly on the subject. In truth, I should think the whole science of Natural History, as a popular branch of education, is likely to assume a new aspect under the auspices of this ingenious and indefatigable man. Now, that all the known facts of Mineralogy are to him "familiar as household words," he will have it in his power to devote more of his attention to the various branches of Zoology, which hitherto, as he says very candidly, he has not had either leisure or opportunity to discuss and illustrate, as his inclinations would lead him to do. The same acuteness which has enabled him so completely to overcome all the difficulties of his own favourite department, will ere long, I doubt not, elevate him to the first rank among the zoologists of Britain; and he will soon have the honourable satisfaction of instituting a school of Natural History in the northern metropolis, which may long remain unrivalled in any other country. This desirable object, I am happy to learn, he is now likely to accomplish more easily and speedily than he could before have expected,

by means of a most valuable and interesting acquisition, which is about to be obtained by the University. The fine cabinet of M. Dufresne of the Jardin des Plantes, so well known and deservedly admired by all the Parisian sçavants, has just been purchased for the public Museum. This, with certain additions to be procured at the approaching sale of Mr Bullock's extensive collections, when combined with the great treasures which the University already possesses, will certainly form by far the most magnificent Museum of Natural History in Britain.

Such is the general view I have been able to form of the actual state of the science, under this celebrated professor. From various conversations, however, with himself, Dr Brewster, and some of the young gentlemen who attend the professor's lectures, I am sorry to hear, that, on the whole, the science of Natural History neither has been, nor is, cultivated throughout Scotland, with any degree of zeal corresponding to the opportunity which the country affords. Its natural advantages are far superior, in most respects, to those of the sister kingdom; and the situation of Edinburgh, in particular, may be

justly regarded as more favourable than any in the island for the pursuit of this delightful study. Indeed, it would not be easy to determine, why a higher state of advancement has not been attained; and the difficulty is much increased when we consider, that, in addition to the great facility which this most picturesque district affords for the practical pursuit of the science, the Professorship of Natural History has already been held for several years by the assiduous and intelligent gentleman, of whom I have spoken so much.

I am inclined to attribute this to the joint operation of a great number of causes; but I observe, that Professor Jameson himself considers the too engrossing influence of the law as being the most immediate and effectual of all the dampers under which his favourite study has so long languished. Most of the young men of this city are trained up either as barristers or attornies: and it very unfortunately happens, that all more liberal pursuits, (both classical and scientific,) so far from being much respected or held in estimation by these classes of men, are, for the most part, regarded as quite inconsistent with a diligent discharge of their professional

duties and functions. Professor Jameson informs me, that three-fourths of the students who attend his lectures, are strangers and students of medicine, chiefly English. Those of the last mentioned faculty, who are indigenous to Scotland, have, till very lately at least, either procured appointments in regiments stationed in foreign quarters, or retired to distant corners of the country, where the entire absence of books, and the laborious and unsettled life enjoyed, or rather endured, by rural practitioners, have been more than sufficient to extinguish every spark of science, which might have been kindled in their bosoms during their attendance at the University. And thus, though very great and increasing benefits are derived by the students of this science in Edinburgh, from the zeal and talents of Professor Jameson, and other causes, it would seem that the science must, for a considerable time, look for its best fruits in the south. I rejoice to find that the English students who resort to this place, are duly impressed with a sense of the advantages which they enjoy.

I dined with Professor Jameson yesterday, with a small party of his most distinguished pupils. Among these there was one whom the Profes-

sor particularly introduced me to—a Mr James Wilson, brother to the poet. This young gentleman follows the profession of a Writer to the Signet, (which, as I have told you, is the name for the highest class of attornies in Edinburgh); but forms, as Mr Jameson assured me, a brilliant exception to the neglect with which matters of science are commonly treated by the members of the profession. He is very young—many years junior to his more celebrated brother, and no casual observer would suspect them to be of the same family. I have already described to you the exterior of the poet; James is a thin, pale, slender, contemplative-looking person, with hair of rather a dark colour, and extremely short-sighted. In his manners also, he is as different as possible from his brother; his voice is low, and his whole demeanour as still as can be imagined. In conversation he attempts no kind of display; but seems to possess a very peculiar vein of dry humour, which renders him extremely diverting. Notwithstanding all these differences, however, I could easily trace a great similarity in the construction of the bones of their two faces; and, indeed, there is nothing more easy to imagine, than that, with much of the same original powers

and propensities, some casual enough circumstances may have been sufficient to decide, that the one of the brothers should be a poet, and the other a naturalist. The parts of the science of which Mr James Wilson is fondest, are Ornithology and Entomology—studies so delightful to every true lover of nature, that, I suspect, they are, in some measure, practically familiar to every poet who excels in depicting the manifestations, and in tracing the spirit of beauty in the external universe. Professor Jameson, indeed, informed me, that his young friend is, in truth, no less a poet than a naturalist—that he possesses a fine genius for versification, and has already published several little pieces of exquisite beauty, although he has not ventured to give his name along with them.

On leaving the professor's, young Wilson and I adjourned to this house (where, by the way, Mr Oman enjoys very little of my company,) and had a quiet bowl of punch together, and a great deal of conversation respecting subjects connected with the science in which he so greatly excels, and for which I myself, albeit nothing of an adept, have long entertained a special partiality. Among other topics, the brumal retreat of the

swallow was handled at considerable length. Mr Wilson I find rather inclined to that theory, which would represent Africa as the principal winter-depot of at least several of the species—the Hirundo, Apus, and Rustica, in particular; and he adduced, in confirmation of this, a passage from Herodotus, which I had never before heard pointed out with a view to this subject—according to which, one kind of swallow (from the description, he seemed to suppose it must be the Swift,) remains *in Egypt throughout the whole year*—δι ετεος εοντες ϗκ απολειπεσι. I have never, indeed, met with any man who seemed to possess a greater power of illustrating subjects of natural history, by quotations from writers of all kinds, and in particular from the poets. Milton and Wordsworth, above all, he appears to have completely by heart; and it was wonderfully delightful to me to hear matters, which are commonly discussed in the driest of all possible methods, treated of in so graceful a manner by one who is so much skilled in them. Nothing could be more refreshing than to hear some minute details about birds and insects, interrupted and illuminated by a fragment of grand melancholy music from the Paradise Lost, or the Excursion.

I shall have occasion to say a great deal more to you both about Professor Jameson and his young friend.

Meantime, believe me ever

Most affectionately your's,

P. M.

LETTER XXII.

TO THE REV. DAVID WILLIAMS.

Dear David,

I believe I have already hinted to you, that the students in this University are very fond of Debating Societies, and, indeed, the nature of their favourite studies might prepare one abundantly to find it so. They inhale the very atmosphere of doubt, and it is in the course of nature that they should exhale the very breath of disputation. They are always either actually struggling, *vi et armis*, to get over some quagmire or another, or, after establishing themselves once more on what they conceive to be a portion of the Terra Firma, falling out among themselves, which of the troop had picked his way along the neatest set of stepping-stones, or made his leap from the firmest knot of rushes. Before they have settled this mighty quarrel, it is possible they may begin to feel the ground giving way beneath their feet, and are all equally reduced once again to hop, stride, and scramble, as they best may for themselves.

The first of the institutions, however, which I visited, is supposed to be frequented by persons who have already somewhat allayed their early fervour for disputation, by two or three years' attendance upon Debating Societies, of an inferior and of a far more ephemeral character. While he attends the prælections of the Professor of Logic, the student aspires to distinguish himself in a club, constituted chiefly or entirely of members of that class. The students of Ethics and of Physics are, in like manner, provided with separate rooms, in which they canvass at night the doctrines they have heard promulgated in the lecture of the morning. It is not till all this apprenticeship of discipline has been regularly gone through, that the juvenile philosopher ventures to draw up a petition, addressed to the president and members of the Speculative Society of Edinburgh, which humbly sheweth forth, that he would fain be permitted to give to his polemical and oratorial faculties the last finish of sharpness and elegance under the high auspices of their venerable body.*

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* The names of some of the minor Debating Clubs are amusing enough—these are, among others, the *Didactic*, the *Polemical*, the *Philomathic*, the *Dialectic*, the *Philalethic*, the *Select*, the *Select Forensic*—and last not least, *the Pansophical!*

Without sending in such a petition as this, and being admitted formally a member of the Society, it is not possible to be present at one of their meetings. These sages will scarcely allow a poor passing stranger to catch even one side-long odour of their wisdom. No—it is necessary to assume the regular garb of the initiated, before these Hierophants will expand the gates of their Adytus, and reveal to you the inspiring glories of their mysteries. Although I could not help feeling some qualmish suspicions, that this arrangement might, in part at least, have been dictated by a due reverence for the old maxim, *omne ignotum pro magnifico*, yet the way in which I heard the Society spoken of, by persons for whose opinion I could not but entertain a high respect, and the curiosity which I certainly felt, to witness for myself all possible manifestation of the rising genius of Scotland, were enough to counterbalance any little scruples I might have, and I resolved, since less might not avail, to affix the name of Peter Morris, M. D. to the regular formula of supplication. It was attested by Mr ——, who is an honorary member of the Society, and by his nephew, a young man of considerable promise, that the said Peter

Morris, M. D., was, in their judgment, possessed of such a measure of learning and ability, as might justify the Society in admitting him into their bosom; and after the usual ceremonies of doubt, delay, examination, and panegyric, the said Peter was ballotted for and admitted as aforesaid. I rather grudged a fee of three guineas, which, I was given to understand, formed an essential preliminary to my taking my seat; but, however, as I had been pretty fortunate at loo the evening before, I did not allow this to form any lasting impediment to my honours. As the poet sings,—

> "I prize not treasure for itself,
> But what it can procure;
> Go hang, said I, the paltry pelf
> Would keep the spirit poor."

So I paid my three guineas, and prepared to make my appearance next Tuesday evening.

For the sake of being near the scene of action, I agreed to the proposal of the gentlemen who had recommended me to the society, viz. to having a snug dinner with one or two friends in addition, in a tavern immediately adjoining. The name of the house is the Lord Nelson, and it is kept by one Barclay. We went at half

past four, in order that we might have time to drink our bottle comfortably before the meeting; and I assure you, I have very seldom enjoyed either a better dinner or a better bottle. There is an ordinary in the house every day at that very hour, which is attended, as I was informed, by a considerable number of students, besides a host of bagmen, and other travellers of all descriptions, and many half-pay officers of the naval, military, and, above all, of the medical establishments. We had a glimpse of them and their dinner, *en passant*, and I promise you both made a very joyous appearance. As for us, we dined apart in a room of very magnificent proportions, which of old, it seems, had been the dining-room of a celebrated President of the Court of Session;* a lofty hall, with a rich ceiling in the French style of stucco work, and decorated at one extremity with a huge portrait of the Hero whose name the tavern bears—evidently a genuine production of the sign-post school. The princely size of the room, however, and elevation of the roof, were sufficient to give the whole affair an air of gentility, and even of splendour, such as is not often to be met

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* Dundas.

with in a house of this description. I don't know whether your comfort is so much affected by accessories of this sort as mine are; but I do at all times enjoy a dinner tenfold, when it is served up in a room of airy and stately dimensions. The fare in itself was very excellent. We had a dish of Mullicatawny, and some cod's-head and shrimp-sauce—superior corned beef, and a boiled turkey—a haricot—a pigeon-pie and macaroni—all for half-a-crown a-head, being only a sixpence more than the charge at the ordinary. But to me the greatest luxury was some very fine draught-porter, the first I have met with since I came to Scotland, for the people of this place in general drink all their malt-liquor bottled—but the landlord of the Nelson is an Englishman, and knows better. After finishing a bottle of Madeira, we had some very fair Port, which we chose to drink mulled, being assured that Mrs Barclay piques herself upon her scientific use of spices in that kind of preparation. The skill of our hostess gave us entire satisfaction, and we kept her at work pretty closely till seven o'clock. Being so very agreeably seated and entertained, I could scarcely think of removing at so very extraordinary an hour, and dropped a modest hint that the Speculative

might be advantageously deferred till another opportunity; but my objections were over-ruled by my companions. I insisted, however, that we should, at least come back after the debate, to enjoy an epilogue in the same taste with our prologue,—an idea which appeared to meet the wishes of the company, and was indeed agreed to *per acclamationem.*

The Speculative Society is the only institution of the kind, whose existence is acknowledged in a formal manner by the University. It forms a part of the system, and, as such, is provided with chambers within the College—advantages which are, no doubt, owing to the high reputation the Society has at particular times enjoyed. At the present time, as it happens, the alterations and improvements which are going on within the University buildings, have dislodged the Society from their old chambers, and the new and more splendid accommodations designed for them, are not quite in readiness for their reception. Their temporary place of meeting is in the hall of the Theological Professor—a low roofed, dark, mean-looking place, surrounded with shelves groaning under Dutch and Puritanical Divinity; and here it was that I had the honour of being introduced to them.

Right opposite to the door at which we entered, in a huge elbow-chair, or rather pulpit—from which the Professor of Divinity is, no doubt, accustomed to expound the mysteries of Calvinism, —and, with an air of grave dignity, which any professor might be happy to equal, sate a pale snub-nosed young gentleman, with a hammer in his hand, the President (*primâ facie*) of the Speculative Society. His eyes half-shut, as if to exclude the distracting dazzle of the tallow candles that blazed close before him; his right hand on his hammer, and his left supporting with two of its fingers the weight of meditation lodged within his forehead; his lips compressed with the firmness of conscious authority, and his whole attitude, as it were, instinct with the very spirit of his station, completed a picture, which, I should suppose, might have produced no trifling effect on the nerves of an entrant more juvenile than myself. Even on me, the "Vultus sedentis tyranni" was not entirely lost, and I confess I was glad when I found that I had fairly seated myself in a dark and remote corner of the room, without attracting any of his attention.

Immediately under this imposing figure might

be descried the less awful, but no less important face and figure of the secretary, who was employed at this moment in calling over the names of the members, according to their position in the muster-roll of the Society. Around a green table, at the head of which Mr Secretary was placed, a few of the more grave and dignified-looking members were accommodated with cane-backed chairs; while, on either side, the *humilior caterva* occupied some rows of narrow wooden benches, which rise one above another out of the area of the apartment. All together there was an appearance of expectation and preparation, both in their arrangement and in their countenances, which could not fail to excite a considerable degree of attention and respect.

In general, they seemed to be very young men, the majority of them, I dare say, not above twenty; but here and there might be seen a few persons of somewhat maturer age in the midst of them. These, as Mr —— informed me, are, for the most part, incipient advocates—willing, I presume, to exercise their lungs here, because they have less opportunity than they could wish of exercising them elsewhere—and not, peradventure, without hope, that the fame acquired and sustained by them among their brethren of

the Speculative, may tend to procure them readier access to a more lucrative species of reputation elsewhere. I thought I could see in some of the faces of these gentlemen, an air of peculiar suavity and graciousness, as if they were willing to have something of the credit of condescension to keep them in countenance with themselves and their neighbours. One gentleman, much older than any of these, occupied a place close by the table, with a mild and paternal look of protection. On asking Mr —— who this was, I learned that Mr Waugh (for that is his name) had long been treasurer of the Society, and had, in the course of his life, conferred upon its members, both in their individual and corporate capacity, so many important favours, that it is no wonder he should have formed a warm attachment to all their interests, and should take a sincere pleasure in coming regularly to be a witness of their exertions. It is easy to imagine the impression, which long custom, and the consciousness of having done good, may have been sufficient to make upon a person of benevolent dispositions, such, as I am informed, are those of Mr Waugh.

By and by, the catalogue being finished, and some minor ceremonies duly performed, one of

the young gentlemen stepped from his place, and ascending to a small tribune on the left hand of the President, began to read aloud from a MS. which he held in his hand. It is the custom, it seems, that the business of the Society is always opened by an essay from one of the members, and the person, whose turn it was to minister in this way to their edification, had already announced, as the title of his discourse—"A few Considerations on the Policy of the Corn-Bill." I listened for some minutes to what he said; but soon perceived, that the whole of his merits amounted to nothing more than having translated from bad into worse English, a treatise on the same subject in the Edinburgh Review; so I amused myself during the rest of the performance with some hearty sighs, for having so easily been induced to distrust my own inclinations, and quit Mrs Barclay for the Speculative.

After the essayist had brought his labours to a close, the President opened his eyes, (which as yet he had never found leisure to do,) and began to ask the members, if they had any remarks to offer in regard to the performance they had heard. A pause of several minutes ensued—during which the funereal silence of expectation

was only disturbed by a few faint hems from those who intended to be most critical on the occasion, and the rustling of the leaves of the MS., which the author was restoring to his pocket, with a look that spoke as plain as look could speak it—" Jamque opus exegi!" At last, one of the gentlemen I have mentioned stood up in his place and observed, that, " considering it as a very improper thing, that an essay of so much brilliancy should be allowed to pass unnoticed, he could not help rising to express his astonishment at the delay which had just occurred. The essay," he said, " displayed every quality which could render an essay honourable to its writer, and agreeable to the Society, Its matter was not, indeed, new: but in its arrangement, a very extraordinary degree of skill had certainly been exemplified. The language he could not help considering as still more worthy of admiration—it was simple, concise, and elegant, where matters of detail were treated of; but rose to a pitch of splendour and majesty in the more empassioned parts of the subject, such as he could not say he had often met with in any authors of our age. On the whole, when he reflected on the weight and importance of the subject, and the difficulty of treating such a subject in a way

at once popular and scientific, he could not help saying, he looked upon the essay which the honourable gentleman had just delivered, as one of the most wonderful productions to which, in his long—his very long experience, even the Speculative Society of Edinburgh had ever had the honour of giving birth. (*Hear ! hear !*) He begged to sit down with returning his warmest acknowledgments to the honourable essayist, for the instruction and delight which his genius had afforded to himself individually, and had no doubt, the Society would concur in the propriety of expressing similar sentiments, in a way more consistent with their dignity, and more gratifying to the honourable essayist, through the mouth of his honourable friend—their President."—(*Hear ! hear !*)

The applauses with which the termination of this address was greeted, yielded in a few seconds to the sharp, shrill discordant accents of a stout young man, who had started up with an air of much vehemence, from a very aerial and distant part of the room, and descended into the centre of the assembly. " Mr President," (said he—for the energy of his style would be lost were I to make use of the third person,)—" Mr President, I rise under such a mixture of feel-

ings, as at no former period of my life ever agitated, overwhelmed, confounded, oppressed, and disturbed this struggling bosom. Mr President, I rise, I say, under the pressure and influence—under the weight, burden, and impending imperativeness of a host of feelings, in which, notwithstanding all their respect for the honourable and learned member who has just sat down, I am confident, and proudly confident, the great majority, the great and enlightened majority of this great and enlightened Society, will have no difficulty in expressing their entire, and hearty, and cordial concurrence. Mr President, I rise, in a word, to give vent to the conflicting tumults, which at this moment are displaying all their might in rending asunder the repose of a mind, which, whatever in other respects it may be entitled to, will be acknowledged, by all the members who hear me, to have at no period displayed any measure of lukewarmness, coldness, or indifference, to the high, enduring, and important interests of the Speculative Society of Edinburgh. *(Hear! hear!)* Mr President, I have been for seven years a member—I hope you will bear me witness, a faithful, diligent, and attentive member (more, my humble natural faculties will not permit me to be,) of the Specu-

lative Society of Edinburgh. *(Hear, hear.)* Mr President, on my legs as I now am, in the presence of this Society, a body, for whom, so long as life stirs within my bosom, or consciousness within my brain, I shall always retain the warmest, and most affectionate, and most filial, and most fraternal admiration, gratitude, and respect,—*(Hear! hear!—Bravo!—hear! hear!)* Mr President, on my legs as I now feel myself to be," (by the way, the orator stood only upon one of them, and kept the other extended behind him, as if to assist the effect of his manual gesticulations)—" Mr President, it is absolutely impossible that I should refrain from expressing my feeling of pain, horror, contempt, disgust, and indignation, that the Speculative Society of Edinburgh should ever have been subjected to listen to such an essay as has just been delivered, from any of its members. Mr President, the essay which you have just heard, possesses no one iota of such merit as an essay delivered in the Speculative Society of Edinburgh ought to possess—meagre in matter, cold in conception, impotent in illustration, false in facts, absurd in argument, and barren in basis, it would scarcely have been better than it is, though it had wanted its supernumerary sins

and blazing blemishes, of dark diction, farragoed phraseology, lame language, and offensive figurativeness. (*Hear! hear!*) Mr President, I shall not stop at present to enlarge upon defects, which my mind tells me have excited the same sensations in almost every bosom that beats around this table. Mr President, I shall not waste breath in the vain endeavour to express an indignation, which is too big for utterance, too full for words. I shall sit down, with proposing, that the gentleman who delivered this essay receive from the chair a warning to consider better with himself before he again presumes to insult the Speculative Society of Edinburgh, with the crude and hasty suggestions of a mind, that, I am sorry to say, does not seem to be filled with proper ideas concerning the nature, the objects, and the duties of the Speculative Society of Edinburgh." (*Hear! hear! hear!*)

A small creaking voice arose from the right side of the President, on the conclusion of this harangue, and its proprietor proceeded in a tone of quiet, feeble, and querulous hesitation, (which afforded an irresistibly ludicrous contrast to the manner of his fiery and foaming predecessor,) to " reprobate the idea of the warmth—the unnecessary—the improper—and, he must add, the

disagreeable warmth, with which his honourable and learned friend, who had just sat down, had expressed himself. The merits of an essay, such as his honourable and learned friend on the opposite side of the house had this evening delivered, were not to be annihilated by such an effusion of invective as that which his honourable and learned friend in his eye had thought proper to make use of. The essay of his honourable friend had probably been produced at the expense of very great labour and exertion of body and mind. The midnight oil had been wasted in the composition of his honourable friend's essay. His honourable friend had, to his certain knowledge, absented himself from all parties of pleasure to which he had been invited during the greater part of this spring, in order to collect materials, and facts, and illustrations, for the essay, which they had that night heard from his friend. The honourable gentleman in his eye should have recollected, that it is not to be expected that every member of this Society should possess the same rapidity of genius as he (the gentleman in his eye) possessed. He should have considered, that the question of the corn bill is one attended with infinite difficulty in all its branches; that it is necessary, in order to

write an essay on this subject, to undergo the fatigue of examining into a vast variety of documents and treatises, and to study what all the great authors on political economy, from Adam Smith downwards, have written concerning the nature of the sources of national wealth and prosperity, and to decide among the conflicting opinions of a vast variety of the most eminent persons who were at this moment occupied with the study of the whole question, both within and without the pale of the Speculative Society of Edinburgh. For himself, he had not come to this house with the view of merely criticising the production of his honourable and learned friend the Essayist, but rather of laying before the Society the results of his own investigations on the same highly interesting topic; and the first of these results, to which he begged to call the attention of the house, was a view of the effects which were produced on Hamburgh, by the occupation of that port and city by Marshal Davoust. It would be found, that no subject could be attended with greater difficulties than that now upon the table of the Society; they ought to enter upon the inquiry with all the calmness which subjects of that imperative interest demand; and he must say, that he expected, after

they should have gone over the thirteen heads of argument which he had marked out for the subject of his present address, he expected the Society would come to the conclusion, that the question of the corn-bill was one, which at least required to be studied before it could be expected to be solved.—

"The first topic to which I shall call the notice of this house," said he, "is that of the true nature of corn—corn, Mr President—

* * * * * *

corn—is not to be regarded," &c. &c. &c.—But I think it would be rather too much, were I to trouble you with the rest of the silly, confused, unintelligible string of hackneyed facts, and hackneyed conclusions with which this young gentleman troubled his audience for at least an hour and a half.—At the end of that period, one half of the company were fast asleep; the rest yawning and fidgetting, and now and then shuffling with their feet. No hints, however, could produce the least effect on the unwearied indefatigable listlessness of their apathetic orator. Whole pages from the Parliamentary Debates, mixed up with whole pages from Malthus, and these again intermingled with endless trite disquisitions, stolen from Reviews, Magazines, and

Weekly Papers—the whole mighty mass of dulness intermingled, with not one ray either of novelty or ingenuity—power or elegance—the dose proved too much even for my iron nerves. My uneasiness was such, that at last I fairly lost temper, and seizing my hat, escaped, as best I might, from the Speculative Society of Edinburgh. My companions on each side of me had been asleep for an hour, but my removal awakened them; and, after rubbing their eyes, and looking round them for a moment, they both had the good sense to follow my example.

On looking at my watch, I found it was eleven o'clock, and I could not help reproaching myself a good deal for the time I had been wasting. The transition from this scene of solemn and stupid drivelling, to the warm fire-side of Mrs Barclay,—her broiled haddocks, her scolloped oysters, and her foaming tankards, was one of the most refreshing things I have ever experienced. But I see it is now late; so adieu for the present.

P. M.

LETTER XXIII.

TO THE SAME.

Dear David,

I am extremely delighted to observe how much effect the craniological remarks, so liberally, yet so modestly, distributed over the surface of my correspondence, have been able to produce upon you. I once thought you had the organ of stubbornness and combativeness very luxuriantly brought out, but shall from henceforth be inclined to think I had been mistaken in my observation of your head. My best advice to you in the meantime is, to read daily with diligence, but not with blind credulity, in Dr Spurzheim's book, which, I rejoice to hear, you have purchased. Pass your fingers gently around the region of your head, whenever any

new idea is suggested to you by his remarks, and I doubt not you will soon be a firm believer, that " there are more things in heaven and earth than we once dreamt of in our philosophy."

The aversion which you say you at first felt for the science is, however, a natural, and therefore I cannot help regarding it as a very excusable sort of prejudice. The very names which have been bestowed upon the science—*Cranioscopy* and *Craniology*—to say nothing of the still coarser *Schädellehre* (or skull doctrine) of its first doctor and professor, are disagreeable terms, on account of their too direct and distinct reference to the bones. They bring at once before the imagination a naked skull, and in persons who have not been trained to the callousness of the dissecting-room, conceptions of a nature so strictly anatomical, can never fail to excite a certain feeling of horror and disgust. I am glad to find that this feeling had been sanctioned by antiquity; for, in some quotations from Athenæus, which fell casually into my hands the other day, it is expressly mentioned, that the Greeks considered it as " improper to speak of the physical substances of the head." I perfect-

ly enter into the spirit of tastefulness and wisdom, which suggested such a maxim to that most intellectual people. Among them the doctrine of pure materialism had not merely been whispered in mystery in the contemplative gardens of Epicurus; it had gone abroad over the surface of the people, and contaminated and debased their spirit. The frail fabric of their superstitious faith presented but too obvious a mark for the shafts of infidel wit, and it was no wonder that they who were wise enough to feel the necessity of guarding this fabric, should have possessed no very accurate notions concerning the true limits of its bulwarks. In our days, however, there is assuredly no reason for being so very timorous; and I think a philosophical person like you should, *bonâ fide*, set yourself to get rid of a prejudice which is no longer entitled to be regarded as either a necessary or a convenient one.

It is much to be wished notwithstanding, that some name could be found for this admirable science, which would give less offence even to those who are rather disposed than otherwise to give it its fair chance of thriving in the world. I have been thinking a great while on this subject, and have balanced in my own mind the

merits of more *oscopies* and *ologies*, than I care to trouble you with repeating. *Craniology* itself, over and above the general and natural prejudice I have already talked of, labours under a secondary, an adventitious, and a merely vulgar prejudice, derived from the ignorant and blundering jokes which have been connected with it by the writers of Reviews and Magazines. It is wonderful how long such trifling things retain their influence; but I would hope this noble science is not to be utterly hanged (like a dog,) because an ill name has been given to it. Sometimes, after the essence of a man's opinion has been proved to be false and absurd, even to his own satisfaction, it is necessary, before he can be quite persuaded to give it up, that we should allow a few words to be sacrificed. These are the scape-goats which are tossed relentlessly over the rock, after they are supposed to be sufficiently imbued and burthened with the sins of the blundering intellect that dictated them. And such, I doubt not, will, in the issue, be the fortune of poor, derided, despised, but innocent, although certainly somewhat rude and intractable *Craniology.—Cranioscopy*, (particularly since Dr Roget has undertaken to blacken its reputation in the Supplement to the Encyclopædia Britannica,)

may be pretty sure of sharing the same melancholy fate. There is no doubt that Jack and Gill must tumble down the hill in company.

Anthropology pleased me very much for a few days; but it is certainly too vague. It does not sit close enough, to show the true shape and character of that which it would clothe. Cephalology and Cephaloscopy would sound uncouth, and neither of them would much improve the original bargain with which we are quarrelling. Organology shares in something of the same defect with Anthropology. In short, as yet I have not been able to hit on any thing which exactly pleases on reflection. Although a worse cranioscopist, you are a better linguist than I am; so I beg you to try your hand at the coining of a phrase. A comparatively unconcerned person may perhaps be more fortunate than a zealous lover like myself; for it is not in one respect only that women are like words. In the mean time, when it is necessary to mention any person's brain, it may be best to call it his Organization. It is perhaps impossible altogether to avoid employing expressions of an anatomical cast; but the more these can be avoided, the better chance there will most assuredly be of rendering the science popular.

It is one in which the ladies have quite as much interest as we have; and I think every thing should be done, therefore, that may tend to smooth and soften their reception of it. In its essence, it possesses many, very many, points of captivation, which I should think were likely to operate with wonderful success on the imagination of the female sex. The best and the wisest of the sex, with whom I ever conversed in a confidential manner, confessed to me, that the great and constantly besetting plague of women, is their suspicion that they are not permitted to see into the true depths of the character of men. And indeed, when one considers what an overbalancing porportion of the allusions made in any conversation between two men of education, must be entirely unintelligible to almost any woman who might chance to overhear them, it is impossible to wonder that the matter should stand as it does. It is not to be expected, that she should be able to understand the exact relation which the intelligible part of their talk may bear to the unintelligible. She sees a line tossed into a depth, which is to her as black as night, and how should she be able to guess, how far down may be the measure of its descent?

Now, what a charming thing must it appear in the eyes of one, who is habitually tormented in this way, to hear of a science that professes to furnish a key, not indeed to the actual truth of the whole characters of men, but to that of many important parts in their characters? I can conceive of nothing more ecstatic than the transport of some bitter unsatisfied Blue-Stocking, on first hearing that there is such a science in the world as Craniology. "Ha!" she will say to herself—"we shall now see the bottom of all this mystery. The men will no longer dare to treat us with this condescending sort of concealment. We shall be able to look at their skulls, and tell them a little plain truth whenever they begin to give themselves airs."

Now, I am for making the science as popular as possible—indeed, I think, if kept to a few, it would be the basest and most cruel kind of monopoly the world ever witnessed—and, therefore, I should like to see my craniological brethren adapt their modes of expression and explanation, as much as possible, to the common prejudices of this great division of disciples. It is well known what excellent proselyte-makers they are in all respects; and I am decidedly for having all their zeal on our side. One plain and

obvious rule, I think, is, that the head should always be talked of and considered in the light of a Form—an object having certain proportions from which certain inferences may be drawn. Besides, in adhering to this rule, we shall only be keeping to the practice of the only great Craniologists the world ever produced—the Greeks.—I do not mean to their practice in regard to expressing themselves alone; but to their practice, in gathering and perfecting those ideas concerning this science, which they have expressed in a far more lasting way than words can ever rival. As dissection of human bodies was entirely unknown among the ancients, it is obvious, that their sculptors and painters must have derived all their knowledge from the exterior of the human form. The external aspect of the head is all that nature exhibits to us, or intends we should see. It is there that expression appears and speaks a natural language to our minds—a language of which our knowledge is vague and imperfect, and almost unconscious; but of which a few simple precepts and remarks are enough to recall to our recollection the great outlines, and to convince me at least, that a very little perseverance might suffice to render us masters of much of the practical detail.

You will smile perhaps when you hear me talk in so satisfied a tone about the craniologi cal skill of the Greeks; and yet there is nothing of which I am more thoroughly convinced, than that they did, practically at least, understand infinitely more of the science than any of the disciples of Gall and Spurzheim are likely to rival even a century hence. There is one circumstance, —a small one, you will say,—which suggested itself to me yesterday, for the first time, when I was sitting after dinner, in a room where several large plaster-of-Paris busts were placed on the extremities of a side-board. What is called *Grace,* is chiefly to be found in those movements which result from organs on the top of the head. In women, there is more of it than in men, because their animal faculties are smaller. Now, in all paintings of Madonnas, particularly of the *Matres Amabiles,* the attitude evidently results from the faculties in the region above the forehead. The chin is drawn in, and the upper fore-part of the head leans forward. This is not done with a view to represent modesty and humility alone; which, by suspending the action of pride and self-love in the back part of the head, take away what kept it upright. The attitude of humility, therefore, results from a nega-

tive cause. But the Madonnas have often a look quite dignified and assured, of unquestioning adorable divine serenity; and the leaning forward of the brow in them, is accompanied with an air which denotes the activity of a positive cause—namely, the principle of love in the upper parts of the forehead. This was suggested to me, however, not by a picture of the Madonna, but by a Grecian bust—and I think you will scarcely suspect which this was. It was one of which the whole character is, I apprehend, mistaken in modern times—one which is looked at by fine ladies with a shudder—and by fine gentlemen with a sneer. Artists alone study and love it—their eyes are too much trained to permit of any thing else. But even they seem to me entirely to overlook the true *character* of that, which, with a view to quite different qualities, they fervently admire. In the Hercules Farnese (for this is the bust,) no person who looks on the form and attitude with a truly scientific eye, can possibly believe that he sees only the image of brute strength. There are few heads on the contrary more human in their expression—more eloquent with the manly virtue of a mild and generous hero. And how indeed could a Grecian sculptor have dared to represent the

glorious Alcides in any other way? How do the poets represent him?—As the image of divine strength and confidence, struggling with and vanquishing the evils of humanity—as the emanation of divine benevolence, careless of all, but doing good—purifying the earth from the foulness of polluting monsters—avenging the cause of the just and the unfortunate—plunging into Hell in order to restore to an inconsolable husband the pale face of his wife, who had died a sacrifice to save him—himself at last expiring on the hoary summit of Athos, amidst the blaze of a funeral pile which had been built indeed with his own hands, but which he had been compelled to ascend by the malignant cruelty of a disappointed savage. The being who was hallowed with all these high attributes in the strains of Sophocles, Euripides, and Pindar—would any sculptor have dared to select Him for the object in which to embody his ideas of the mere animal power of man—the exuberance of corporeal strength? So far from this, the Hercules has not only one of the most intellectual heads that are to be found among the monuments of Greek sculpture, but also one of the most graceful. With the majesty which he inherits from the embrace of Jupiter, there is mingled a mild and

tender expression of gentleness, which tells that he has also his share in the blood, and in the miseries, of our own lower nature. The stooping reflective attitude may be that of a hero weary with combat, but is one that speaks, as if his combatting had been in a noble cause—as if high thoughts had nerved his arm more than the mere exultations of corporeal vigour. His head is bent from the same quarter as that of the Madonnas, and whoever takes the trouble to examine it, will find, that in this particular point is to be found the chief expansion and prominence of his organization.

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P. M.

LETTER XXIV.

TO THE SAME.

OMAN'S, TUESDAY EVENING.

DEAR DAVID,

IN a place where education is so much diffused among the men, it is natural to suppose, that the women also must, in no inconsiderable degree, be imbued with some passion for literature. The kinds of information most in request here, (and, indeed, necessarily so, when we reflect on the means of education which the place affords,) are evidently much more within the reach of the Fair Sex, than in most other cities of the same importance. To be able to talk with fluency about the Politics and Belles Lettres of the day, is all that is required of an accomplished man in Edinburgh, and these are accomplishments which the ladies, modest as they are,

would require more modesty than is either natural or proper to suppose themselves incapable of acquiring. That ignorance of the learned languages and ancient literature, which the men have not the assurance to attempt disguising, has broken down effectually the first and most insurmountable barrier which separates the intellectual pretensions of the two sexes in England, and, indeed, in almost all the capitals of Europe. The universal neglect with which the more ancient and massy literature, even of our own island, seems to be treated, has removed another mighty, although not quite so insurmountable barrier; and, in short, between the men and the women, for aught I can see, there is no "gulf fixed." The men, indeed, seem still to be anxious to prolong, in their own favour, the existence of something of that old *prestige*, which owes the decay of its vigour entirely to themselves. But the greatest Mysogynists in the world have never accused the sex of being deficient in acuteness of discernment, and the ladies of Edinburgh are quite sufficiently quick-sighted, not to allow the advantages which have been given them, to slip unused through their fingers.

So far as I may judge from my own short experience, however, the Scottish ladies, in general, are very far from pushing these advantages to any undue extent. It is not necessary to enter minutely into the causes of their forbearance in this respect; for a much slower person than Mr David Williams would have no great difficulty in forming a pretty fair guess, as to the most efficient of them. The merit which they do certainly possess and exemplify in this part of their conduct, may perhaps be divided into pretty equal shares between the influences of Nature and those of Art. Those gentler and more delicate feelings of our nature, which all their modes of life—their hopes, fears, pleasures, and sorrows, render them better able to appreciate, are alone, I should think, more than enough to weaken with the best of them the influence of those lighter and more transitory feelings, which derive gratification or uneasiness from the conscious possession or conscious want of such a measure of literary information, as is common among either the men or the women with whom they can be called upon to associate. With those of a less feminine and less just character, in point of mere feeling, there cannot be wanting enough of penetration to teach them, that

the confession of inferiority is one of the most cunning treacheries with which to bait the hook of female fascination; and thus it is that the highest and most sacred of inspirations, on the one hand, co-operate with not a few less lofty and generous suggestions on the other, to keep within limits the infection of blue-stockingism—the one set of motives, as might befit their origin, attacking the secret root and essence of the mania for insignificant acquisition—the other no less appropriately, and no less powerfully, chilling and repressing the mania for insignificant display.

There are, however, abundant exceptions to this rule even here. Innate and incorrigible vanity in some; particular incidents in the early history of others, too minute to be explained in any general terms of description; and in a few cases, without doubt, the consciousness of capacity of a really extraordinary nature, have been sufficient to create a certain number of characters, which are somewhat inaccurately and unjustly classed together by the gentlemen of Edinburgh, under the appellation of "our Blue-stockings." With the chief and most prominent persons of this class, it has as yet been my good or evil fortune to come very little in contact.

My introductions into society in this place, have been mostly through the intervention of the men of high literary character, and these are here, as everywhere, the greatest, that is to say, the most contemptuous enemies the Blue-stocking tribe has to encounter. Last night, however, I was present at a small rout, or *converzatione*, which, although the lady of the house is by no means a Blue-stocking, had not a little of the appearance of a Blue-stocking party about it. A number of the principal *Bas-bleus* were there, and a considerable proportion of the literati, small and great, were, of course, in attendance. In short, I suspect it was as near an approach to the true and genuine scene, as I am likely to have an opportunity of observing.

I was ushered into a room decently crowded with very well-drest people, and not having any suspicion that much amusement was likely to be had, I privately intended to make my bow to Mrs ——, and retire as soon as possible—for I had left a very snug party over their claret at my friend Wastle's, and certainly thought I could spend the rest of the evening more agreeably with them, than at any such rout as I had yet met with in Edinburgh. I had not been

long in the room, however, when I heard Mr Jeffrey announced, and as I had not seen him for some time, I resolved to stay, and if possible, enjoy a little of his conversation in some corner. When he entered, I confess I was a good deal struck with the different figure he made from what I had seen at Craig Crook. Instead of the slovenly set-out which he then sported—the green jacket, black neckcloth, and grey pantaloons—I have seldom seen a man more nice in his exterior than Mr Jeffrey now seemed to be. His little person looked very neat in the way he had now adorned it. He had a very well-cut blue coat—evidently not after the design of any Edinburgh artist—light kerseymere breeches, and ribbed silk stockings—a pair of elegant buckles—white kid gloves, and a tri-color watch-ribbon. He held his hat under his arm in a very *degagée* manner—and altogether he was certainly one of the last men in the assembly, whom a stranger would have guessed to be either a great lawyer or a great reviewer. In short, he was more of a Dandy than any great author I ever saw—always excepting Tom Moore and David Williams.

Immediately after him, Dr Thomas Brown

came into the room, equipped in an equally fashionable, though not quite so splendid manner, and smiling on all around with the same mild, gentle air, which I had observed on his entrance to his Lecture-room. Close upon his heels followed Professor Leslie, with a large moss-rose in his bosom. The Professor made his obeisance to one or two ladies that stood near him, and then fixing himself close by the fire-place, assumed an aspect of blank abstraction, which lasted for many minutes without the least alteration. The expression of his massy features and large grey eyes, rolling about while he stood in this attitude, was so solemn, that nothing could have formed a more amusing contrast to the light and smiling physiognomies of the less contemplative persons around him. I saw that Mr Jeffrey was eyeing him all the while with a very quizzical air, and indeed heard him whisper something about *heat* to Lady ——, with whom he was conversing, which I fear could have been nothing more innocent than some sarcasm against the ruminating philosopher. For my part, I now perceived plainly, that I was in a rout of no ordinary character, and, rubbing my spectacles, prepared to make the best use of my time.

While I was studying very attentively the fine hemispherical developement of the organ of Causality, in the superior part of Mr Leslie's head, I heard the name of the Earl of Buchan, travelling up the stair-case, from the mouth of one lackey to that of another, and looked round with some curiosity to see the brother of the celebrated Chancellor Erskine. His lordship came into the room with a quick and hurried step, which one would not have expected from the venerable appearance of his white hairs—the finest white hairs, by the way, I ever saw, and curling in beautiful ringlets all down his shoulders. I could easily trace a strong family resemblance to his brother, although the Earl has much the advantage, in so far as mere beauty of lineament is concerned. I do not remember to have seen a more exquisite old head, and think it is no wonder that so many portraits have been painted of him by the artists of Edinburgh. The features are all perfect; but the greatest beauty is in his clear blue eyes, which are chased in his head in a way that might teach something to the best sculptor in the world. Neither is there any want of expression in these fine features; although, indeed, they are very far from

conveying anything like the same ideas of power and penetration, which fall from the overhanging shaggy eye-brows of his brother. The person of the old Earl is also very good; his legs, in particular, are well shaped, and wonderfully muscular in their appearance, considering their length of service.

He ran up immediately to Professor Leslie, with whom he seemed to be on terms of infinite familiarity, and began to talk about the new plan for a Grand National Monument in Scotland, in honour of the conclusion of the late war. "My dear Professor," said he, "you must really subscribe—your name, you know, merely your name. As the Duke of Sussex says to myself, in a letter I received from his Royal Highness only this morning, upon this very subject—Lady B——'s nephew is aide-de-camp to his Royal Highness, and he is particularly kind and attentive on my account—His Royal Highness says, he has just taken the liberty (he does me too much honour,) to put me down as one of the committee. My dear Lord Buchan, are his Royal Highness's words, we positively can't go on without you—you must give us your name—Now do, Professor, do give us your name." And then,

without looking or waiting for the worthy Professor's reply, his Lordship passed across the room to Mr Jeffrey, and seizing him by the button, and whispering close into his ear, began making the very same request (for I could catch the words "Duke of Sussex,") in, I doubt not, the same phrase. But he stopped not for the reply of Mr Jeffrey any more than for that of Professor Leslie; and after looking round the room for a single moment, he vanished through a folding-door into an inner apartment, where, from some preparatory screams of a violin that reached my ear, I had no doubt there was about to be an interlude of concert, to break the intense seriousness of thought, supposed to be inseparable from the keen intellectual collisions of a *conversazione.*

On looking into the room which had just received Lord Buchan, I observed him take his place among a row of musical cognoscenti, male and female, who already occupied a set of chairs disposed formally all around the centre of enchantment. By and bye, a young lady began thumping on the piano-forte, and I guessed, from the exquisite accompaniment of Mr Yaniewicz, that it was her design to treat us with some of

the beautiful airs in the Don Giovanni of Mozart. Nothing, however, could be more utterly distressing, than the mode in which the whole of her performance murdered that divine masterpiece, unless, indeed, it might be the nauseous sing-song of compliments, which the ignorance or the politeness of the audience thundered out upon its conclusion.

After this blessed consummation had restored to us the free use of our limbs and tongues, (I say free—for in spite of nods, and whispers of rebuke, administered by some of the Dowagers, our silence had never been much more complete than the music merited,) I joined a small party, which had gradually clustered around Mr Jeffrey, and soon found that the redoubtable critic had been so unfortunate as to fall into an ambush laid to entrap him by a skilful party of blue-stocking *tirailleures*. There he was pinioned up against the wall, and listening with a greater expression of misery than I should have supposed to be compatible with his Pococurante disposition to the hints of one, the remarks of another, the suggestion of a third, the rebuke of a fourth, the dissertation of a fifth, and last, not least, in this cruel catalogue of inflictions, to the question of

a sixth. " Well now, Mr Jeffrey, don't you agree with me, in being decidedly of opinion, that Mr Scott is the true author of the Tales of my Landlord? O Lord!—they're so like Mr Scott, some of the stories—one could almost believe one heard him telling them. Could not you do the same, Mr Jeffrey?"—The shrug of ineffable derision which Mr Jeffrey vainly endeavoured to keep down, in making some inaudible reply of two syllables to this, did not a whit dismay another, who forthwith began to ply him with query upon query, about the conduct of Lord Byron, in deserting his wife—and whether or not, he (Mr Jeffrey) considered it likely, that Lord Byron had had himself (Lord Byron) in his eye, in drawing the character of the Corsair —" and oh, now Mr Jeffrey, don't you think Gulnare so romantic a name? I wish I had been christened Gulnare. Can people change their names, Mr Jeffrey, without an estate?"—" Why, yes, Ma'am," replied the critic—after a most malicious pause, " by being married."—* * * * " Mr Jeffrey," exclaimed a fierce-looking damsel with a mop head—" I insist upon hearing if you have read Peter Bell—will you ever be convinced? Shall I ever be able to persuade you?

Can you deny the beauty of the white sapling—"as white as cream?" Can you be blind to the pathetic incident of the poor ass kneeling under the blows of the cruel, hard-hearted, odious Peter? Can you be blind to the charm of the boat?"

"Why—oh—the laker has made a good deal of his tub—"*Twin sister to the Crescent-Moon.*"

"Ah! naughty man, you are incorrigible—I'll go speak to Mr Wilson."

I looked round, and saw Mr Wilson. He had a little book of fishing-flies in his hand, and was loudly and sonorously explaining the beauty of a bit of grizzled hackle on the wings of one of them to Mr Mackenzie. My venerable friend seemed to be listening with the deepest interest to what he said, but the young lady broke in upon their conversation with the utmost intrepidity. I could just hear enough of what passed, to be satisfied, that the brother poet made as light of the matter as the adverse critic. I suspect, that from the cruelty of Peter Bell's bludgeon, she made a transition to the cruelty of killing poor innocent trouts; but before that subject had time to be adequately discussed, supper was announced, and I descended close be-

hind Mr Jeffrey, who had a lady upon each arm, one all the way down discussing the Bank Restriction Bill, and the other displaying equal eloquence in praise of " that delightful—that luminous Article in the last Number upon the Corn Laws."

Ever your's,

P. M.

LETTER XXV.

TO THE SAME.

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I WAS never a lover of Blue-Stockings either at home or abroad; but of all that I have met with, I think the French are the most tolerable, and the Scotch the most tormenting. In France the genuine power and authority which the women exert, and have long exerted, in swaying the course of public opinion in regard to a vast variety of subjects, are sufficient, were there nothing more, to make one excuse a great deal of their petulance and presumption. And then there is a light graceful ease about the manner

of their trespasses, which would carry off the indignation of a Diogenes himself. How is it possible to feel any serious displeasure against a pretty creature that comes tripping up to you with a fan in her hand, and seems quite indifferent whether you ask her to dance a quadrille with you, or sit down by your side, and discuss the merits of the last *roman?* The truth is, however, that the French ladies in general talk about things they do understand something about—or at least, which it is easy and natural to imagine, may be interesting to their feelings. But what say you to the Scottish Blue-Stockings, whose favourite topics are the Resumption of Cash-payments, the great question of Borough Reform, and the Corn-Bill? They are certainly the very *flour* of their sex. "Ohe! jam satis est"—I would not be badgered as the great critic is for a moiety of his reputation.

I was at another party of somewhat the same kind last night, where, however, I had the satisfaction of seeing several more characters of some note, and therefore, I repented not my going. Among others, I was introduced to Mrs Grant of Laggan, the author of the Letters from the Mountains, and other well known works. Mrs Grant is

really a woman of great talents and acquirements, and might, without offence to any one, talk upon any subject she pleases. But I assure you, any person that hopes to meet with a Blue-Stocking, in the common sense of the term, in this lady, will feel sadly disappointed. She is as plain, modest, and unassuming, as she could have been had she never stepped from the village, whose name she has rendered so celebrated. Instead of entering on any long common-place discussions, either about politics, or political economy, or any other of the hackneyed subjects of tea-table talk in Edinburgh, Mrs Grant had the good sense to perceive, that a stranger, such as I was, came not to hear disquisitions, but to gather useful information; and she therefore directed her conversation entirely to the subject which she herself best understands—which, in all probability, she understands better than almost any one else—and which was precisely one of the subjects, in regard to which I felt the greatest inclination to hear a sensible person speak—namely, the Highlands. She related, in a very simple, but very graphic manner, a variety of little anecdotes and traits of character, with my recollections of which I shall always have a plea-

sure in connecting my recollections of herself. The sound and rational enjoyment I derived from my conversation with this excellent person, would, indeed, atone for much more than all the Blue-Stocking sisterhood have ever been able to inflict upon my patience.

Ever your's,

P. M.

LETTER XXVI.

TO THE SAME.

I REMEMBER when Kean, in the first flush of his reputation, announced his intention of spending Passion-week in Edinburgh, to have seen a paragraph extracted from a Scots newspaper, in which this circumstance was commented on in a way, that I could scarcely help regarding as a little ridiculous. I cannot recall the exact words; but the northern editor expressed himself somewhat in this style—"We are happy to hear it rumoured, that the celebrated new actor, Mr Kean, proposes making his first appearance on our boards during the approaching holidays. He no doubt feels much anxiety to have the favourable opinion of the London public confirmed and sanctioned by the more fastidious and deli-

cate discrimination, which, as all the sons of Thespis are well aware, belongs to the enlightened and refined, although candid and generous, audience of our metropolis."

What the measure of Mr Kean's anxiety on this occasion might really have been, I possess no means of learning; but from all that I have seen and heard of the Edinburgh audience, I must confess I do not think, were I myself an actor, their favourable verdict would be exactly the crowning and finishing grace, for which I should wait with any very supernatural timidity of expectation. That they should for a moment dream of themselves as being entitled to claim weight and authority, equal (to say nothing of superior) to what is claimed and received by the great audience of the British capital—this is a thing, at the first glance, so superabounding in absurdity, that I could scarcely have believed it to be actually the case, unless, from innumerable little circumstances and expresssions which have fallen under my own observation, I had been compelled to do so. How old this ridiculous prejudice of self-complacency may be, I know not; but I suspect that it, like many other ridiculous prejudices of the place, has been fostered

and pampered into its present luxuriant growth by the clamorous and triumphant success of the Edinburgh Review. Accustomed to see one or two of their fellow-citizens sitting in undisputed pre-eminence above all the authors of England, it must have seemed a small matter that they themselves should claim equal awe from the actors of England, when these ventured to think of strutting their hour on this side of the "Ideal Line." —However this may be, there is no doubt the notion does exist, and the Edinburgh audience *bonâ fide* consider themselves as the most polite assemblage of theatrical critics that the world has produced since the days of Athens. I think Aristophanes, could he look up and see them, would observe a very sad change from his own favourite "σοφωτατοι θεαται."

There is no doubt, that the size of such a theatre as the Edinburgh one is much more favourable to accuracy of criticism, than a house of larger dimensions can be. It is somewhat larger than the Hay-Market; but it is quite possible to observe the minutest workings of an actor's face from the remotest parts of the pit or the boxes; and the advantages, in point of hearing, are of course in somewhat the same measure. The house, however, has newly been

lighted up in a most brilliant manner with gas, and this, I should think, must be anything rather than an improvement, in so far as purposes truly theatrical are concerned. Nothing, indeed, can be more beautiful than the dazzling effect exhibited, when one first enters the house—before, perhaps, the curtain is drawn up. The whole light proceeds from the centre of the roof, where one large sun of crystal hangs in a blazing atmosphere, that defies you to look up to it—circle within circle of white flame, all blended and glowing into one huge orb of intolerable splendour. Beneath this flood of radiance, every face in the audience, from the gallery to the orchestra, is seen as distinctly as if all were seated in the open light of noon-day. And the unaccustomed spectator feels, when his box-door is opened to him, as if he were stepping into a brilliant ball-room, much more than as if he were entering a theatre.

But the more complete the illumination of the whole house, the more difficult it of course must be to throw any concentrating and commanding degree of light upon the stage; and the consequence, I should think, is, that the pleasure which this audience now derive from looking at each other, is just so much taken

from the pleasure which, in former times, they might have had in looking at the performers. There is nothing more evident, than that the stage should always be made to wear an appearance in all respects as different as possible from the rest of the theatre. The spectator should be encouraged by all possible arts to imagine himself a complete eaves-dropper, a peeper, and a listener, who is hearing and seeing things that he has no proper right to hear and see. And it is for this reason, that I approve so much of the arrangement usually observed in the French, the German, but most of all in the Italian theatres, which, while it leaves the whole audience enveloped in one sheet of dim and softened gloom, spreads upon the stage and those that tread it, a flood of glory, which makes it comparatively an easy matter to suppose, that the curtain which has been drawn up was a part of the veil that separates one world of existence from another. In such a theatre, the natural inclination every one feels is to be as silent as possible—as if it were not to betray the secret of an ambush. The attention, when it is drawn at all to the stage, is drawn thither entirely; and one feels as if he were guilty of a piece of foolish negligence every moment he removes his gaze

from the only point of light on which he has the power to rest it. * * * In such a theatre as that of Edinburgh, on the contrary, all is alike dazzle and splendour. The Dandy of the Green-room is not a whit more ridiculous, or a whit better seen, than his double close by your side; and every blaze of rouge or pearl powder displayed by the Pseudo-Belles of the distance, finds its counterpart or rival on the cheek or shoulder of some real goddess on your foreground. In short, a poor innocent Partridge, introduced for the first time to theatrical spectacle in such a place as this, would, I think, be not a little at a loss to discover at what part of the house it should be his business to look. He would of course join in every burst of censure or applause; but he might, perhaps, be mistaken in his idea of what had called for the clamour. He might take the ogle of Miss —— for a too impudent clap-trap, or perhaps be caught sobbing his heart out in sympathy with some soft flirtation-scene in the back-row of Lady ——'s side-box.

Whatever other effects it might have, this mode of illumination was at least very useful to me in my inspection of the redoubtable Edin-

burgh audience. These great bug-bears of criticism could not hide one of their heads from me, and there I was armed cap-a-pee with the whole proof of Cranioscopical and Physiognomical acumen, to reconnoitre their points of strength and of weakness with equal facility and equal safety. I looked first, as in duty bound, to the gods; but could see nothing there worthy of detaining my attention, except the innocent stare of a young country-girl, who seemed to be devouring the drop-scene with both her eyes, and at the same time rewarding with an hysterical giggle, the soft things whispered into her ear by a smooth red-nosed, rather elderly serving-man, who appeared to have much the air of being at home on the brink of that Olympus. Neither did the boxes seem to present any very great field of observation; but, in fact, most of the leading physiognomies in that region of the house were already quite sufficiently familiar to me. It was in the pit that my eyes at once detected their richest promise of a regale. The light falling directly upon the skulls in that quarter, displayed, in all becoming splendour, every bump and hollow of every critical cranium below me.

They belonged for the most part, as Mr W—— whispered to me, to young attornies, and clerks, and apprentices of the same profession, who are all set free from their three-legged stools and fustian-sleeves early every Saturday evening, and who commonly make use of this liberty to shew their faces in the pit. A few lawyers of a higher order might be seen looking rather superciliously around them, sprinkled here and there over the surface of the crowd. Nor were there wanting some faces of more stable breadth, and more immovable dulness, than are almost ever exhibited even by the dullest of the legal tribe—a few quiet comfortable citizens I could see, who certainly looked very much like sheep among foxes, although I by no means take them to be positive simpletons neither. Perhaps the unquestioning looks of happy anticipation with which these good people seemed to be waiting for the commencement of the play, gave quite as much promise of just criticism as the pert, peaked features, the impatient *nasi adunsi*, and merciless pertinacity of grin displayed by the jurisprudential Zoili round about them. Such as the two elements were, I could perceive that they were to form between them, as best

they might, the critical touch-stone of the evening.—Again I quote, *omne ignotum pro magnifico.*—

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The pièce was the new Drama founded upon the novel of Rob Roy. I had promised myself much pleasure in seeing it, from the accounts I had heard of the two principal performers that make their appearance in it, and I was never less disappointed. The scenery, in the first place, was as splendid as possible; indeed, till within these very few years, London never could shew any thing in the least capable of sustaining a comparison with it. Whether the stage was to represent the small snug parlour of Baillie Jarvie in the Saltmarket of Glasgow, or the broad and romantic magnificence of Loch Katrine, winding and receding among groves of birch and mountains of heather, the manager had exerted equal liberality, and his artists equal skill, to complete the charm of their counterfeit. There is something very delightful in observing the progress which theatrical taste is making among us, in regard to this part of its

objects at least. Nothing gratifies one more than to see that great pains have been taken to please them; and a whole audience is sensible to this kind of pleasure, when they see a new play got up with a fine fresh stock of scenery, to salute their eyes with novelty at every turn of the story. Besides, in such a play as this, it would have been quite intolerable to discover any want of inclination to give its heroes every possible advantage of visual accompaniment to their exertions. Every body was already as well acquainted as possible with Mattie, Major Galbraith, Andrew Fairservice and the Dugald Creature—to say nothing of those noble kinsmen, Baillie Jarvie and Rob Roy; and every one would have looked upon it as a sort of insult to his own sense and discernment, had he seen any of these dear friends, otherwise than in the same dress and place in which they had already been introduced, and rendered familiar to him by the great Magician, whose wand had called them into being. I confess, however, that familiar as I had long been with these characters, and with that of the Baillie, *imprimis*, I was perfectly refreshed and delighted when they stood before me, living and moving in actual bodily presence.

The illusion of theatrical deception cannot possibly be carried farther than it was in the case of Baillie Jarvie, as personified on this occasion by Mr Mackay. I could have sworn that every curl in his neat brown periwig—every button on his well brushed, dark, purple coat—every wrinkle in his well blacked, tall, tight boots, had been familiar to me from infancy. And then the face—what a fine characteristic leanness about the jaws—not the least appearance of starvation or feebleness, but the true horny firmness of texture that I had always pictured to myself in the physiognomy of a Common-council-man of the Land of Cakes! And what truth of expression in the grey eyes of the worthy warm hearted Baillie! The high aerial notes at the ending of his sentences, and the fine circumnavigation of sound in his diphthongs, were quite new to my imagination, but I could not for a single moment suspect them of being any other than authentic. I could scarce believe him when he said, "a body canna carry the Saut-market upon his back."

The "Dugald Creature" was quite as good in his way—indeed even better, for it must have required no trivial stretch of power to be able to embody so much rudeness without taking a

single iota from so much poetry of character. Rob Roy himself made a glorious appearance in his blazing tartans, eagle plume, target and broad-sword; and nobody that saw him could question his right to levy "black mail"—a single glance was sufficient to shew, that, in the opinion of such a personage as this which trod the stage before us,

> "Rents and Factors, Rights of Chace,
> Sheriffs, Lairds, and their domains,
> All had seemed but paltry things,
> Not worth a moment's pains."

Mr Murray (the manager) himself personated "the Saxon Captain," who is made prisoner by Roy's wife, in a style of perfect propriety, looking more like a soldier, and infinitely more like a gentleman, than almost any actor of the present day, that I have seen on either side of the Tweed. I admired particularly the strict attention which he had paid to his costume; for he made his appearance in a suit of uniform, which I suppose, must have been shaped exactly after the pattern of the Duke of Cumberland's statue. The profuse flaps and skirts of the coat, and the smart, ferocious cock of the small hat, perched on the top of several rows of beautiful stiff curls,

carried one back at once to the heart of the days of Marlborough and Bickerstaff.

Perhaps the most purely delightful part of the whole play, was the opening of one of the acts, when I found myself suddenly transported into the glen of Aberfoil, and heard the pibroch of the Macgregors stealing along the light breeze of the morning, among those very shores which had been spread before my fancy in so many hues of Arcadian delight, by the novel itself, and the Lady of the Lake, its kindred predecessor. Already I feel that it is impossible I should leave Scotland without visiting, in good earnest, these romantic scenes. However, I must allow the season to be somewhat better advanced, ere I think of venturing upon that excursion. I am determined, indeed, to delay it as long as I can, in order that I may see it when adorned with its whole midsummer garniture of leaves.

Mr Murray acts as manager in behalf of Mrs Henry Siddons, whose husband had taken a long lease of the Theatre shortly before his death. I think you once told me that you had seen this charming actress play at Bath, therefore I need not say any thing about her style of perform-

ance. She is, I believe, appreciated here as she ought to be; indeed, I know not that it is possible for any audience, wherever assembled, or however composed, to be insensible to the chaste and delicate fascination of that most feminine sort of acting. In looking at her, one feels that there would be a want of gallantry in not being delighted with so pure a picture of every thing that renders the captivation of womanly gracefulness complete. I speak at present, of course, of her most favourite walk. But you probably are well aware that Mrs Henry Siddons is scarcely less successful, when she goes down many steps in the scale of character. Nor do you need to be told, that, in the highest walk of the art itself, she displays not unfrequently a power, and energy, and dignity of feeling, which are less talked of than they deserve to be, only because it is not possible to forget, when thinking of the daughter-in-law, the deeper and more majestic magic of the unrivalled mother.

The birth of Mrs Siddons and her brother, (for they are of an ancient Scottish family,) creates no inconsiderable feeling of interest in their favour, among this pedigree-revering people. The uniform propriety, and indeed amiable and exem-

plary modesty of their own character and deportment, in all the relations of private life, may well furnish them with yet better claims to the kindness of their fellow-citizens.

P. M.

LETTER XXVII.

TO THE SAME.

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I SHOULD be very much at a loss, if I were obliged to say positively, either at what hour or from what point of view, the external appearance of this city is productive of the noblest effect. I walk round and round it, and survey it from east, west, north, and south, and everywhere it assumes some new and glorious aspect, which delights me so much at the moment, that I am inclined to think I have at last hit upon the true station from whence to survey its beauties. A few steps bring me to some new eminence, from which some yet wider and more diversified picture of its magnificence opens itself to my eyes, or perhaps to some winding ravine, the dark and precipitous sides of which, while

they shut out much of this imposing expanse of magnitude, form a deep and concentrating framework, in whose centre some one isolated fragment assumes a character of sublimity, that seems almost to throw the wider field of variety and splendour into temporary shade. I have at last given up the attempt; and am contented to let my admiration be as impartial as the charm is universal.

In every point of view, however, the main centre of attraction is the Castle of Edinburgh. From whatever side you approach the city—whether by water or by land—whether your foreground consist of height or of plain, of heath, of trees, or of the buildings of the city itself—this gigantic rock lifts itself high above all that surrounds it, and breaks upon the sky with the same commanding blackness of mingled crags, cliffs, buttresses, and battlements. These, indeed, shift and vary their outlines at every step, but everywhere there is the same unmoved effect of general expression—the same lofty and imposing image, to which the eye turns with the same unquestioning worship. Whether you pass on the southern side, close under the bare and shattered blocks of granite, where the crumbling turrets on the summit seem as if they had

shot out of the kindred rock in some fantastic freak of Nature—and where, amidst the overhanging mass of darkness, you vainly endeavour to descry the track by which Wallace scaled—or whether you look from the north, where the rugged cliffs find room for some scanty patches of moss and broom, to diversify their barren grey—and where the whole mass is softened into beauty by the wild green glen which intervenes between the spectator and its foundations—wherever you are placed, and however it is viewed, you feel at once that here is the eye of the landscape, and the essence of the grandeur.

Neither is it possible to say under what sky or atmosphere all this appears to the greatest advantage. The heavens may put on what aspect they choose, they never fail to adorn it. Changes that elsewhere deform the face of nature, and rob her of half her beauty, seem to pass over this majestic surface only to dress out its majesty in some new apparel of magnificence. If the air is cloudless and serene, what can be finer than the calm reposing dignity of those old towers—every delicate angle of the fissured rock, every loop-hole and every lineament seen clearly and distinctly in all their minuteness? or, if the mist be wreathed around the basis of the rock,

and frowning fragments of the citadel emerge only here and there from out the racking clouds that envelope them, the mystery and the gloom only rivet the eye the faster, and half-baffled Imagination does more than the work of Sight. At times, the whole detail is lost to the eye—one murky tinge of impenetrable brown wraps rock and fortress from the root to the summit—all is lost but the outline; but the outline atones abundantly for all that is lost.—The cold glare of the sun, plunging slowly down into a melancholy west beyond them, makes all the broken labyrinth of towers, batteries, and house-tops paint their heavy breadth in tenfold sable magnitude upon that lurid canvass.—At break of day, how beautiful is the freshness with which the venerable pile appears to rouse itself from its sleep, and look up once more with a bright eye into the sharp and dewy air!—At the "grim and sultry hour" of noon, with what languid grandeur the broad flag seems to flap its long weight of folds above the glowing battlements! When the day-light goes down in purple glory, what lines of gold creep along the hoary brow of its antique strength! When the whole heaven is deluged, and the winds are roaring fiercely, and "snow and hail, and stormy vapour," are

let loose to make war upon his front, with what an air of pride does the veteran citadel brave all their well-known wrath, "cased in the unfeeling armour of old time!" The Capitol itself is but a pigmy to this giant.

But here, as every-where, moonlight is the best. Wherever I spend the evening, I must always walk homewards by the long line of Prince's-Street; and along all that spacious line, the midnight shadows of the Castle-rock for ever spread themselves forth, and wrap the ground on which I tread in their broad repose of blackness. It is not possible to imagine a more majestic accompaniment for the deep pause of that hour. The uniform splendour of the habitations on the left opening every now and then broken glimpses up into the very heart of the modern city—the magnificent terrace itself, with its stable breadth of surface—the few dying lamps that here and there glimmer faintly—and no sound, but the heavy tread of some far-off watchman of the night—this alone might be enough, and it is more than almost any other city could afford. But turn to the right, and see what a glorious contrast is there. The eternal rock sleeping in the stillness of nature—its cliffs of granite—its tufts of verdure—

all alike steeped in the same unvarying hue of mystery—its towers and pinnacles rising like a grove of quiet poplars on its crest—the whole as colourless as if the sun had never shone there, as silent as if no voice of man had ever disturbed the echoes of the solemn scene. Overhead, the sky is all one breathless canopy of lucid crystal blue—here and there a small bright star twinkling in the depth of æther—and full in the midst the Moon walking in her vestal glory, pursuing, as from the bosom of eternity, her calm and destined way—and pouring down the silver of her smiles upon all of lovely and sublime that nature and art could heap together, to do homage to her radiance. How poor, how tame, how worthless, does the converse even of the best and wisest of men appear, when faintly and dimly remembered amidst the sober tranquillity of this heavenly hour! How deep the gulph that divides the tongue from the heart—the communication of companionship from the solitude of man! How soft, yet how awful, the beauty and the silence of the hour of spirits.

I think it was one of the noblest conceptions that ever entered into the breast of a poet, which made Göethe open his Faustus with a scene of moonlight. The restlessness of an intellect wea-

ried with the vanity of knowledge, and tormented with the sleepless agonies of doubt—the sickness of a heart bruised and buffeted by all the demons of presumption—the wild and wandering throbs of a soul parched among plenty, by the blind cruelty of its own dead affections—these dark and depressing mysteries all maddening within the brain of the Hermit Student, might have suggested other accompaniments to one who had looked less deeply into the nature of Man—who had felt less in his own person of that which he might have been ambitious to describe. But this great master of intellect was well aware to what thoughts, and what feelings, the perplexed and the bewildered are most anxious to return. He well knew where it is, that Nature has placed the best balm for the wounds of the spirit—by what indissoluble links She has twined her own eternal influences around the dry and chafed heart-strings that have most neglected her tenderness. It is thus, that this weary and melancholy sceptic speaks—his phial of poison is not yet mingled on his table—but the tempter is already listening at his ear, that would not allow him to leave the world until he should have plunged yet deeper into his snares, and added sins against his neighbour, to sins against

God, and against himself. I wish I could do justice to his words in a translation,—or rather that I had Coleridge nearer me.

Would thou wert gazing now thy last
Upon my troubles, Glorious Harvest Moon!
Well canst thou tell how all my nights have past,
Wearing away, how slow, and yet how soon!
Alas! alas! sweet Queen of Stars,
Through dreary dim monastic bars,
To me thy silver radiance passes,
Illuminating round me masses
Of dusty books, and mouldy paper,
That are not worthy of so fair a taper.
O might I once again go forth,
To see thee gliding through thy fields of blue,
Along the hill-tops of the north;—
O might I go, as when I nothing knew,
Where meadows drink thy softening gleam,
And happy spirits twinkle in the beam,
To steep my heart in thy most healing dew.

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THE FOLLOWING LIST

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LEADING ARTICLES IN THIS WORK.

AGRICULTURE — By ROBERT BROWN, Esq. of Markle, late Editor of the Farmer's Magazine.

ACCIDENTAL COLOURS
ACHROMATIC TELESCOPES
— DAVID BREWSTER, L.L. D. F.R.S. London and Edinburgh.

ANALYSIS, *Geometrical*
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ABSORPTION
— JOHN LESLIE, F.R.S.E. and Prof. of Mathem. in Univer. of Edin.

AMPHIBIA
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DIAMOND
HARTZ, &c.
— ROBERT JAMESON, Esq. F.R.S.E. and F.A.S.E. Regius Prof. of Nat. Hist. in the University Edinburgh.

ACIDS
AFFINITY
ALUM
— JOHN MURRAY, M. D. F.R.S. E. Lecturer on Chemistry, Edinburgh.

ALGEBRA
ARITHMETIC OF SINES, &c.
— WILLIAM WALLACE, Esq. F.R.S.E. One of the Professors of Mathematics in the Royal Military College, Bagshot.

ALIMENTS
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